

ALL THE YEAR ROUND.

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VERY HARD CASH.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "IT IS NEVER TOO LATE TO MEND."

CHAPTER IX.

JULIA took Mr. Hardie's note and read it :

"Madam,—I have received a very juvenile letter from my son, by which I learn he has formed a sudden attachment to your daughter. He tells me, however, at the same time, that you await my concurrence before giving your consent. I appreciate your delicacy; and it is with considerable regret I now write to inform you this match is out of the question. I have thought it due to you to communicate this to yourself and without delay, and feel sure that you will, under the circumstances, discountenance my son's further visits at your house.

"I am,

"Madam,

"With sincere respect,

"Your faithful servant,

"RICHARD HARDIE."

Julia read this letter, and re-read it in silence. It was an anxious moment to the mother.

"Shall our pride be less than this parvenu's?" she faltered. "Tell me yourself, what ought we to do?"

"What we ought to do is, never to let the name of Hardie be mentioned again in this house."

This reply was very comforting to Mrs. Dodd.
"Shall I write to him, or do you feel strong enough?"

"I feel that, if I do, I may affront him. He had no right to pretend that his father would consent. You write, and then we shall not lose our dignity though we are insulted."

"I feel so weary, mamma. Life seems ended."

"I could have loved him well. And now show me how to tear him out of my heart; or what will become of me?"

While Mrs. Dodd wrote to Alfred Hardie, Julia sank down and laid her head on her mother's knees. The note was shown her; she approved it languidly. A long and sad conversation followed; and, after kissing her mother

and clinging to her, she went to bed chilly and listless, but did not shed a single tear. Her young heart was benumbed by the unexpected blow.

Next morning early, Alfred Hardie started gaily to spend the day at Albion Villa. Not a hundred yards from the gate he met Sarah, with Mrs. Dodd's letter, enclosing a copy of his father's to her. Mrs. Dodd here reminded him that his visits had been encouraged only upon a misapprehension of his father's sentiments; for which misapprehension he was in some degree to blame: not that she meant to reproach him on that score, especially at this unhappy moment: no, she rather blamed herself for listening to the sanguine voice of youth; but the error must now be repaired. She and Julia would always wish him well, and esteem him, provided he made no further attempt to compromise a young lady who could not be his wife. The note concluded thus:

"Individually I think I have some right to count on your manly and gentlemanly feeling to hold no communication with my daughter, and not in any way to attract her attention, under the present circumstances.

"I am,

"Dear Mr. Alfred Hardie,

"With many regrets at the pain I fear

"I am giving you,

"Your sincere friend and well-wisher,

"LUCY DODD."

Alfred on reading this letter literally staggered: but proud and sensitive, as well as loving, he manned himself to hide his wound from Sarah, whose black eyes were bent on him in merciless scrutiny. He said doggedly, though tremulously, "Very well!" then turned quickly on his heel, and went slowly home. Mrs. Dodd, with well-feigned indifference, questioned Sarah privately: the girl's account of the abrupt way in which he had received the missive, added to her anxiety. She warned the servants that no one was at home to Mr. Alfred Hardie.

Two days elapsed, and then she received a letter from him. Poor fellow, it was the eleventh. He had written and torn up ten.

"Dear Mrs. Dodd,—I have gained some victories in my life; but not one without two defeats

to begin with; how then can I expect to obtain such a prize as dear Julia without a check or two? You need not fear that I shall intrude after your appeal to me as a gentleman: but I am not going to give in because my father has written a hasty letter from Yorkshire. He and I must have many a talk face to face before I consent to be miserable for life. Dear Mrs. Dodd, at first receipt of your cruel letter, so kindly worded, I was broken-hearted; but now I am myself again: difficulties are made for ladies to yield to, and for men to conquer. Only for pity's sake do not you be my enemy: do not set her against me for my father's fault. Think, if you can, how my heart bleeds at closing this letter without one word to her I love, better, a thousand times better, than my life.

I am,

"Dear Mrs. Dodd,

"Yours sorrowfully,

"but not despairing,

"ALFRED HARDIE."

Mrs. Dodd kept this letter to herself. She could not read it quite unmoved, and therefore she felt sure it would disturb her daughter's heart the more.

Alfred had now a soft but dangerous antagonist in Mrs. Dodd. All the mother was in arms to secure her daughter's happiness *côte que côte!* and the surest course seemed to be to detach her affections from Alfred. What hope of a peaceful heart without this? and what real happiness without peace? But, too wise and calm to interfere blindly, she watched her daughter day and night, to find whether Love or Pride was the stronger: and this is what she observed:

Julia never mentioned Alfred. She sought occupation eagerly: came oftener than usual for money, saying it was for "Luxury." She visited the poor more constantly, taking one of the maids with her, at Mrs. Dodd's request. She studied Logic with Edward. She went to bed rather early, fatigued, it would appear, by her activity: and she gave the clue to her own conduct one day: "Mamma," said she, "nobody is downright unhappy, who is good."

Mrs. Dodd noticed also a certain wildness and almost violence, with which she threw herself into her occupations: and a worn look about the eyes that told of a hidden conflict. On the whole Mrs. Dodd was hopeful; for she had never imagined the cure would be speedy or easy. To see her child on the right road was much. Only the great healer Time could "medicine her to that sweet peace which once she owned;" and even Time cannot give her back her childhood, thought the mother, with a sigh.

One day came an invitation to an evening party at a house where they always wound up with dancing. Mrs. Dodd was for declining as usual; for since that night Julia had shunned parties. "Give me the sorrows of the poor and afflicted," was her cry; "the gaiety of the hollow world jars me more than I can bear." But now she

caught with a sort of eagerness at this invitation. "Accept! They shall not say I am wearing the willow."

"My brave girl!" said Mrs. Dodd, joyfully, "I would not press it; but you are right; we owe it to ourselves to outface scandal. Still, let there be no precipitation; we must not undertake beyond our strength."

"Try me to-night," said Julia; "you don't know what I can do. I dare say he is not pining for me."

She was the life and soul of the party, and, indeed, so feverishly brilliant, that Mrs. Dodd said softly to her, "Gently, love; moderate your spirits, or they will deceive our friends as little as they do me."

Meantime it cost Alfred Hardie a severe struggle to keep altogether aloof from Julia. In fact, it was a state of daily self denial, to which he would never have committed himself, but that he was quite sure he could gradually win his father over. At his age we are apt to count without our antagonist.

Mr. Richard Hardie was "a long-headed man." He knew the consequence of giving one's reasons; eternal discussion ending in war. He had taken care not to give any to Mrs. Dodd, and he was as guarded and reserved with Alfred. The young man begged to know the why and the wherefore, and, being repulsed, employed all his art to elicit them by surprise, or get at them by inference: but all in vain; Hardie senior was impenetrable; and inquiry, petulance, tenderness, logic, were all shattered on him as the waves break on Ailza Craig.

"*Sic volo, sic jubeo, stet pro ratione voluntas,*" was the purport of all he could be got to say, and that was wonderfully little.

Thus began dissension, decently conducted at first, between a father indulgent hitherto, and an affectionate son.

In this unfortunate collision of two strong and kindred natures, every advantage was at present on the father's side; age, experience, authority, resolution, hidden and powerful motives, to which my reader even has no clue as yet; a purpose immutable and concealed. Add to these a colder nature and a far colder affection; for Alfred loved his father dearly.

At last, one day, the impetuous one lost his self-command, and said he was a son, not a slave, and had little respect for Authority when afraid or ashamed to appeal to Reason. Hardie senior turned on him with a gravity and dignity no man could wear more naturally. "Alfred, have I been an unkind father to you all these years?"

"Oh no, father, no; I have said nothing that can be so construed. And that is the mystery to me; you are acting quite out of character."

"Have I been one of those interfering, pragmatical fathers, who cannot let their children enjoy themselves their own way?"

"No, sir; you have never interfered, except to pay for anything I wanted."

"Then make me the one return in your power,

young man; have a little faith in such a father, and believe that he does not interfere now but for your good, and under a stern necessity; and that, when he does interfere for once, and say, 'this thing shall not be,' it shall not be—by God!"

Alfred was overpowered by the weight and solemnity of this. Sorrow, vexation, and despondency all rushed into his heart together, and unmanned him for a moment; he buried his face in his hands, and something very like a sob burst from his young heart. At this Hardie senior took up the newspaper with imperturbable coldness, and wore a slight curl of the lip. All this was hardly genuine, for he was not altogether unmoved; but he was a man of rare self-command, and chose to impress on Alfred that he was no more to be broken or melted than a mere rock.

It is always precarious to act a part; and this cynicism was rather able than wise: Alfred looked up and watched him keenly as he read the monetary article with tranquil interest; and then, for the first time in his life, it flashed into the young man's mind that his father was not a father. "I never knew him till now," thought he. "This man is *αστρογυος*."*

Thus a gesture, so to speak, sowed the first seed of downright disunion in Richard Hardie's house—disunion, a fast growing plant, when men set it in the soil of the passions.

Alfred, unlike Julia, had no panacea. Had any lips, except perhaps hers, told him that "to be good is to be happy here below," he would have replied, "Negatur; contradicted by daily experience." It never occurred to him therefore to go out of himself, and sympathise with the sordid sorrows of the poor, and their bottomless egotism in contact with the well to do. He brooded on his own love, and his own unhappiness, and his own father's cruelty. His nights were sleepless, and his days leaden. He tried hard to read for his first class, but for once even ambition failed: it ended in flinging books away with a curse. He wandered about dreaming and hoping for some change, and bitterly regretting his excessive delicacy, which had tied his own hands and brought him to a stand-still. He lost his colour and what little flesh he had to lose: for such young spirits as this are never plump. In a word, being now strait-jacketed into feminine inactivity, while void of feminine patience, his ardent heart was pining and fretting itself out. He was in this condition, when one day Peterson, his Oxonian friend, burst in on him open-mouthed with delight, and, as usual with bright spirits of this calibre, did not even notice his friend's sadness. "Cupid had clapped Peterson on the shoulder," as Shakespeare bath it; and it was a deal nicer than the bum-bailiff rheumatism.

"Oh, such a divine creature! Met her twice; you know her by sight; her name is Dodd. But

I don't care; it shall be Peterson; the rose by any other name, &c." Then followed a rapturous description of the lady's person, well worth omitting. "And such a jolly girl! brightens them all up wherever she goes; and such a dancer; did the catchouka with a little Spanish bloke Bosanquet has got hold of, and made his black bolus eyes twinkle like midnight cigars: danced it with castanets, and smiles, and such a what d'ye call 'em, my boy, you know; such a 'go.'"

"You mean such an 'abandon,'" groaned Alfred, turning sick at heart.

"That's the word. Twice the spirit of Duvernay, and ten times the beauty. But just you hear her sing, that is all; Italian, French, German, English even."

"Plaintive songs?"

"Oh, whatever they ask for. Make you laugh or make you cry—to order; never says no. Just smiles and sits down to the music-box. Only she won't sing two running: they have to stick a duffer in between. I shall meet her again next week; will you come? Any friend of mine is welcome. Wish me joy, old fellow; I'm a gone coon."

This news put Alfred in a phrensy of indignation and fear. Julia dancing the catchouka! Julia a jolly girl! Julia singing songs pathetic or merry, whichever were asked for! The heartless one! He called to mind all he had read in the classics, and elsewhere, about the fickleness of woman. But this impression did not last long; he recalled Julia's character, and all the signs of a love tender and true she had given him; he read her by himself, and, lover-like, laid all the blame on another. "It was all her cold-blooded mother. Fool that I have been. I see it all now. She appeals to my delicacy to keep away; then she goes to Julia and says, 'See, he deserts you at a word from his father. Be proud, be gay! He never loved you; marry another.' The shallow plotter forgets that whoever she does marry I'll kill. How many unsuspecting girls have these double-faced mothers deluded so? They do it in half the novels, especially in those written by women; and why? because these know the perfidy and mendacity of their sex better than we do; they see them nearer, and with their souls undrest. War! Mrs. Dodd, war to the death! From this moment I am alone in the world with her. I have no friend but Alfred Hardie: and my bitterest enemies are my cold-blooded father, and her cold-blooded mother."

The above sentences, of course, were never uttered. But they represent his thoughts accurately, though in a condensed form, and are, as it were, a miniature of this young heart boiling over.

From that moment he lay in wait for her, and hovered about the house day and night, determined to appeal to her personally, and undeceive her, and baffle her mother's treachery. But at this game he was soon detected: Mrs. Dodd lived on the watch now. Julia, dressed to go

* Without bowels of affection.

out, went to the window one afternoon to look at the weather; but retreated somewhat hastily and sat down on the sofa.

"You flutter, darling," said Mrs. Dodd. "Ah, he is there."

"Yes."

"You had better take off your things."

"Oh yes. I tremble at the thoughts of meeting him. Mamma, he is changed, sadly changed. Poor, poor Alfred!" She went to her own room and prayed for him: she told the Omniscent that, though much greater and better in other respects than she was, he had not Patience. She prayed, with tears, that he might have Christian patience granted him from on high.

"Heart of stone! she shuns me," said Alfred, outside. He had seen her in her bonnet.

Mrs. Dodd waited several days to see whether this annoyance would not die of itself: waiting was her plan in most things. Finding he was not to be tired out, she sent Sarah out to him with a note carefully sealed.

"Mr. Alfred Hardie, is it generous to confine my daughter to the house?"

"Yours regretfully,
"LUCY DODD."

A line came back instantly in pencil.

"Mrs. Dodd,—Is all the generosity and all the good faith to be on one side?"

"Yours in despair,
"ALFRED HARDIE."

Mrs. Dodd coloured faintly: the reproach pricked her, but did not move her. She sat quietly down that moment, and wrote to a friend in London, to look out for a furnished villa in a healthy part of the suburbs, with immediate possession. "Circumstances," said she, "making it desirable we should leave Barkington immediately, and for some months."

The Bosanquets gave a large party; Mrs. and Miss Dodd were there. The latter was playing a part in a charade to the admiration of all present, when in came Mr. Peterson, introducing his friend, Alfred Hardie.

Julia caught the name, and turned a look of alarm on her mother: but went on acting.

Presently she caught sight of him at some distance. He looked very pale, and his glittering eye was fixed on her with a sort of stern wonder.

Such a glance from fiery eyes, that had always dwelt tenderly on her till then, struck her like a weapon. She stopped short, and turned red and pale by turns. "There, that is nonsense enough," said she bitterly, and went and sat by Mrs. Dodd. The gentlemen thronged round her with compliments, and begged her to sing. She excused herself. Presently she heard an excited voice, towards which she dared not look; it was inquiring whether any lady could sing Aileen Aroon. With every desire to gratify the young millionaire, nobody knew Aileen Aroon, or had ever heard of it.

"Oh, impossible!" cried Alfred. "Why it is in praise of Constance, a virtue ladies shine in: at least they take credit for it."

"Mamma," whispered Julia, terrified, "get me away, or there will be a scene. He is reckless."

"Be calm, love," said Mrs. Dodd, "there shall be none." She rose and glided up to Alfred Hardie, looked coldly in his face; then said with external politeness and veiled contempt, "I will attempt the song, sir, since you desire it." She waved her hand, and he followed her sulkily to the piano. She sang Aileen Aroon, not with her daughter's eloquence, but with a purity and mellowness that charmed the room: they had never heard the genius sing it.

As spirits are said to overcome the man at whose behest they rise, so this sweet air, and the gush of reminiscence it awakened, overpowered him who had evoked them; Alfred put his hand unconsciously to his swelling heart, cast one look of anguish at Julia, and hurried away half choked. Nobody but Julia noticed.

A fellow in a rough great-coat and tattered white hat opened the fly door for Mrs. Dodd. As Julia followed her, he kissed her skirt unseen by Mrs. Dodd: but her quick ears caught a heart-breaking sigh. She looked, and recognised Alfred in that disguise. The penitent fit had succeeded to the angry one. Had Julia observed? To ascertain this without speaking of him, Mrs. Dodd waited till they had got some little distance, then quietly put out her hand and rested it for a moment on her daughter's; the girl was trembling violently. "Little wretch!" came to Mrs. Dodd's lips, but she did not utter it. They were near home before she spoke at all, and then she only said very kindly, "My love, you will not be subjected again to these trials:" a remark intended quietly to cover the last occurrence as well as Alfred's open persecution.

They had promised to go out the very next day; but Mrs. Dodd went alone, and made excuses for Miss Dodd. On her return she found Julia sitting up for her, and a letter come from her friend describing a pleasant cottage, now vacant, near Maida Vale. Mrs. Dodd handed the open letter to Julia; she read it without comment.

"We will go up to-morrow and take it for three months. Then the Oxford vacation will terminate."

"Yes, mamma."

I am now about to relate a circumstance by no means without parallels, but almost impossible to account for; and, as nothing is more common and contemptible than inadequate solutions, I shall offer none at all; but so it was, that Mrs. Dodd awoke in the middle of that very night in a mysterious state of mental tremour; trouble, veiled in obscurity, seemed to sit heavy on her bosom. So strong, though vague, was this new and mysterious oppression, that she started up in bed and cried aloud, "David!—Julia!—Oh,

what is the matter?" The sound of her own voice dispelled the cloud in part, but not entirely. She lay awhile, and then finding herself quite averse to sleep, rose and went to her window, and eyed the weather anxiously. It was a fine night; soft fleecy clouds drifted slowly across a silver moon. The sailor's wife was reassured on her husband's behalf. Her next desire was to look at Julia sleeping; she had no particular object: it was the instinctive impulse of an anxious mother whom something had terrified. She put on her slippers and dressing gown, and, lighting a candle at her night lamp, opened her door softly, and stepped into the little corridor. But she had not taken two steps when she was arrested by a mysterious sound.

It came from Julia's room.

What was it?

Mrs. Dodd glided softly nearer and nearer, all her senses on the stretch.

The sound came again. It was a muffled sob.

The stifled sound, just audible in the dead stillness of the night, went through and through her who stood there listening aghast. Her bowels yearned over her child; and she hurried to the door, but recollected herself, and knocked very gently. "Don't be alarmed, love, it is only me. May I come in?" She did not wait for the answer, but turned the handle and entered. She found Julia sitting up in bed, looking wildly at her, with cheeks flushed and wet. She sat on the bed and clasped her to her breast in silence: but more than one warm tear ran down upon Julia's bare neck; the girl felt them drop, and her own gushed in a shower.

"Oh, what have I done?" she sobbed. "Am I to make you wretched too?"

Mrs. Dodd did not immediately reply. She was there to console; and her admirable good sense told her that to do that she must be calmer than her patient; so even while she kissed and wept over Julia, she managed gradually to recover her composure. "Tell me, my child," said she, "why do you act a part with me? Why brave it out under my eye, and spend the night secretly in tears? Are you still afraid to trust me?"

"Oh no, no; but I thought I was so strong, so proud: I undertook miracles. I soon found my pride was a molehill, and my love a mountain. I could not hold out by day if I did not ease my breaking heart at night. How unfortunate! I kept my head under the bed-clothes, too; but you have such ears. I thought I would stifle my grief, or else perhaps you would be as wretched as I am: for give me! pray forgive me!"

"On one condition," said Mrs. Dodd, struggling with the emotion these simple words caused her. "Anything to be forgiven!" cried Julia, impetuously. "I'll go to London. I'll go to Botany Bay. I deserve to be hanged."

"Then, from this hour, no half-confidences between us. Dear me, you carry in your own bosom a much harsher judge, a much less indulgent friend than I am. Come! trust me with

your heart! Do you love him very much? Does your happiness depend on him?"

At this point blank question Julia put her head over Mrs. Dodd's shoulder, not to be seen; and, clasping her tight, murmured scarce above a whisper, "I don't know how much I love him. When he came in at that party I felt his slave; his unfaithful adoring slave; if he had ordered me to sing Aileen Aroon, I should have obeyed; if he had commanded me to take his hand and leave the room, I think I should have obeyed. His face is always before me as plain as life; it used to come to me bright and loving; now it is pale, and stern, and sad. I was not so wretched till I saw he was pining for me, and thinks me inconstant; oh, mamma, so pale! so shrunk! so reckless! He was sorry for misbehaving that night: he changed clothes with a beggar to kiss my dress: poor thing! poor thing! Who ever loved as he does me? I am dying for him; I am dying."

"There! there!" said Mrs. Dodd, soothingly. "You have said enough. This must be love. I am on your Alfred's side from this hour."

Julia opened her eyes, and was a good deal agitated as well as surprised. "Pray do not raise my hopes," she gasped. "We are parted for ever. His father refuses. Even you seemed averse; or have I been dreaming?"

"Me, dearest? How can I be averse to anything lawful, on which I find your heart is really set, and your happiness at stake? Of course I have stopped the actual intercourse, under existing circumstances; but these circumstances are not unalterable: your only obstacle is Mr. Richard Hardie."

"But what an obstacle," sighed Julia. "His father! a man of iron! so everybody says; for I have made inquiries—oh!" And she was abashed. She resumed hastily, "And that letter, so cold, so cruel! I feel it was written by one not open to gentle influences. He does not think me worthy of his son; so accomplished, so distinguished, at the very university where our poor Edward—has—you know."

"Little simpleton!" said Mrs. Dodd, and kissed her tenderly: "your iron man is the commonest clay, sordid; pliable; and your stern heroic Brutus is a shopkeeper; he is open to the gentle influences, which sway the kindred souls of the men you and I buy our shoes, our tea, our gloves, our fish-kettles of: and these influences I command, and will use them to the utmost."

Julia lay silent, and wondering what she could mean.

But Mrs. Dodd hesitated now: it pained and revolted her to show her enthusiastic girl the world as it is. She said as much, and added, "I seem to be going to aid all these people to take the bloom from my own child's innocence. Heaven help me!"

"Oh, never mind that," cried Julia, in her ardent way; "give me Truth before Error however pleasing."

Mrs. Dodd replied only by a sigh: grand ge-

neral sentiments, like that, never penetrated her mind: they glided off like water from a duck's back. "We will begin with this mercantile Brutus, then," said she, with such a curl of the lip. Brutus had rejected her daughter.

"Richard Hardie was born and bred in a bank: one where no wild thyme blows, love; nor cowslips nor the nodding violet grows; but gold and silver chink, and things are discounted, and men grow rich slowly, but surely, by lawful use of other people's money. Breathed upon by these 'gentle influences,' he was, from his youth, a remarkable man; measured by Trade's standard. At five-and-twenty divine what he did! HE SAVED THE BANK. You have read of bubbles; the Mississippi Bubble and the South Sea Bubble. Well, in the year 1825, it was not one bubble but a thousand; mines by the score, and in distant lands; companies by the hundred; loans to every nation or tribe, down to Guatemala, Patagonia, and Greece: two hundred new ships were laid on the stocks in one year, for your dear papa told me; in short, a fever of speculation, and the whole nation raging with it: my dear, Princes, Dukes, Duchesses, Bishops, Poets, Lawyers, Physicians, were seen struggling with their own footmen for a place in the Exchange: and, at last, good, steady, old Mr. Hardie, Alfred's grandfather, was drawn into the vortex. Now, to excuse him and appreciate the precocious Richard, you must try and realise that these bubbles, when they rise, are as alluring and reasonable, as they are ridiculous and incredible when one looks back on them; even soap bubbles, you know, have rainbow hues till they burst; and, indeed, the blind avarice of men does but resemble the blind vanity of women: look at our grandmothers' hoops, and our mothers' short waists and monstrous heads! Yet in their day what woman did not glory in these insanities? Well then, Mr. Richard Hardie, at twenty-five, was the one to foresee the end of all these bubbles; he came down from London and brought his people to their senses by sober reason, and 'sound commercial principles': that means, I believe, 'get other people's money, but do not risk your own.' His superiority was so clear, that his father resigned the helm to him, and, thanks to his ability, the bank weathered the storm, while all the other ones in the town broke, or suspended their trade. Now, you know, youth is naturally ardent and speculative: but Richard Hardie's was colder and wiser than other people's old age: and that is one trait. Some years later, in the height of his prosperity—I reveal this only for your comfort, and on your sacred promise as a person of delicacy, never to repeat it to a soul—Richard Hardie was a suitor for my hand."

"Mamma!"

"Do not ejaculate, sweetest! It rather decomposes me. 'Nothing is extraordinary,' as that good creature says. He must have thought it would *answer*, in one way or another, to have a gentlewoman at the head of his table. And

I was not penniless, *bien entendu*. Failing in this, he found a plain little Thing, with a gloomy temper, and no accomplishments nor graces; but her father could settle twenty thousand pounds. He married her directly: and that is a trait. He sold his father's and grandfather's house and place of business, in spite of all their associations, and obtained a lease of his present place from my uncle Fountain: it seemed a more money-making situation. A trait. He gives me no reason for rejecting my daughter. Why? because he is not proud of his reasons: this walking Avarice has intelligence: a trait. Now put all this together, and who more transparent than the profound Mr. Hardie? He has declined our alliance because he takes for granted we are poor. When I undeceive him on that head he will reopen *negotiations*, in a letter; No. 2 of the correspondence; copied by one of his clerks: it will be calm, plausible, flattering: in short, it will be done like a gentleman: though he is nothing of the kind. And this brings me to what I ought to have begun with; your dear father and I have always lived within our income for our children's sake; he is bringing home the bulk of our savings this very voyage, and it amounts to fourteen thousand pounds."

"Oh, what an enormous sum!"

"No, dearest, it is not a fortune in itself. But it is a considerable sum to possess, independent of one's settlement and one's income. It is loose cash, to speak à la Hardie; that means I can do what I choose with it; and of course I choose—to make you happy. How I shall work on what you call Iron and I call Clay must be guided by circumstances. I think of depositing three or four thousand pounds every month with Mr. Hardie; he is our banker, you know. He will most likely open his eyes, and make some move before the whole sum is in his hands. If he does not, I shall perhaps call at his bank and draw a cheque for fourteen thousand pounds. The wealthiest provincial banker does not keep such a sum floating in his shop-tills. His commercial honour, the one semi-civalrous sentiment in his soul, would be in peril. He would yield, and with grace: none the less readily that his house and his bank, which have been long heavily mortgaged to our trustees, were made virtually theirs by agreement yesterday (I set this on foot within twelve hours of Mr. Iron's impertinent letter), and he will say to himself, 'She can—post me, I think they call it—this afternoon for not cashing her cheque, and she can turn me and my bank into the street tomorrow: and then, of course, he shall see by my manner the velvet paw is offered as well as the claw. He is pretty sure to ask himself which will suit the *ledger* best—this cat's friendship and her fourteen thousand pounds, or—an insulted mother's enmity?' And Mrs. Placid's teeth made a little click just audible in the silent night."

"Oh, mamma! my heart is sick. Am I to be bought and sold like this?"

"You must pay the penalty for loving a parvenu's son. Come, Julia, no peevishness, no more romance, no more vacillation. You have tried Pride and failed, pitifully: now I insist on your trying Love! Child, it is the bane of our sex to carry nothing out. From that weakness I will preserve you. And, by-the-by, we are not going to marry Richard Hardie, but Alfred. Now, Alfred, with all his faults and defects——"

"Mamma! what faults? what defects?"

"Is a gentleman; thanks to Oxford, and Harrow, and nature. My darling, pray to Heaven night and day for your dear father's safe return; for on him, I assure you, and him alone, your happiness depends: as mine does."

"Mamma!" cried Julia, embracing her, "what do poor girls do, who have lost their mother?"

"Look abroad and see!" was the grave reply.

Mrs. Dodd then begged her to go to sleep, like a good child, for her health's sake; all would be well; and with this was about to return to her own room: but a white hand and arm darted out of the bed and caught her. "What! Hope has come to me by night in the form of an angel, and shall I let her go back to her own room? Never! never! never! never!" And she patted the bed expressively, and with the prettiest impatience.

"Well, let Hope take off her earrings first," suggested Mrs. Dodd.

"No, no, come here directly, earrings and all."

"No, thank you; or I shall have *them* hurting you next."

Mrs. Placid removed her earrings, and the tender pair passed the rest of the night in one another's arms. The young girl's tears were dried; and hope revived, and life bloomed again: only, henceforth, her longing eyes looked out to sea for her father; homeward bound.

Next day, as they were seated together in the drawing-room, Julia came from the window with a rush, and knelt at Mrs. Dodd's knees, with bright imploring face upturned.

"He is there; and—I am to speak to him? Is that it?"

"Dear, dear, dear mamma!"

"Well, then, bring me my things!"

She was ten minutes putting them on: Julia tried to expedite her; and retarded her. She had her pace: and could not go beyond it.

By this time Alfred Hardie was thoroughly miserable. Unable to move his father, shunned by Julia, sickened by what he had heard, and indeed seen, of her gaiety and indifference to their separation, stung by jealousy, and fretted by impatience, he was drinking nearly all the bitters of that sweet Passion, Love. But as you are aware he ascribed Julia's inconstancy, lightness, and cruelty, all to Mrs. Dodd. He hated her cordially, and dreaded her into the bargain: he played the sentinel about her door all the more because she had asked him not to do it. "Always do what your enemy particularly objects

to," said he, applying to his own case the wisdom of a Greek philosopher, one of his teachers.

So, when the gate suddenly opened, and instead of Julia, this very Mrs. Dodd walked towards him, his feelings were anything but enviable. He wished himself away, heartily, but was too proud to retreat. He stood his ground. She came up to him: a charming smile broke out over her features, "Ah, Mr. Hardie," said she, "if you have nothing better to do, will you give me a minute?" He assented with an ill grace.

"May I take your arm?"

He offered it with a worse.

She laid her hand lightly on it, and it shuddered at her touch. He felt like walking with a velvet tigress.

By some instinct she divined his sentiments, and found her task more difficult than she had thought; she took some steps in silence. At last, as he was no dissembler, he burst out passionately, "Why are you my enemy?"

"I am not your enemy," said she, softly.

"Not openly, but all the more dangerous. You keep us apart, you bid her be gay, and forget me; you are a cruel hard-hearted lady."

"No, I am not, sir," said Mrs. Dodd, simply.

"Oh! I believe you are good and kind to all the rest of the world; but you know you have a heart of iron for me."

"I am my daughter's friend, but not your enemy; it is you who are too inexperienced to know how delicate, how difficult, my duties are. It is only since last night I see my way clear; and, look, I come at once to you with friendly intentions. Suppose I were as impetuous as you are! I should, perhaps, be calling you ungrateful."

He retorted bitterly, "Give me something to be grateful for, and you shall see whether that baseness is in my nature."

"I have a great mind to put you to the proof," said she, archly. "Let us walk down this lane; then you can be as unjust to me as you please, without attracting public attention."

In the lane she told him quietly she knew the nature of his father's objections to the alliance he had so much at heart, and they were objections, which her husband, on his return, would remove. On this he changed his tone a little, and implored her piteously not to deceive him.

"I will not," said she, "upon my honour. If you are as constant as my daughter is in her esteem for you—notwithstanding her threadbare gaiety worn over loyal regret, and to check a parcel of idle ladies' tongues—you have nothing to fear from me, and everything to expect. Come, Alfred—may I take that liberty with you?—let us understand one another. We only want that to be friends."

This was hard to resist; and at his age. His lip trembled, he hesitated, but at last gave her his hand. She walked two hours with him, and laid herself out to enlighten, soothe, and comfort

his sore heart. His hopes and happiness revived under her magic, as Julia's had. In the midst of it all, the wise woman quietly made terms, he was not to come to the house but on her invitation, unless indeed he had news of the Agra to communicate; but he might write once a week to her, and enclose a few lines to Julia. On this concession he proceeded to mumble her white wrist, and call her his best, dearest, loveliest friend; his mother. "Oh, remember!" said he, with a relic of distrust; "you are the only mother I can ever hope to have."

That touched her. Hitherto, he had been to her but a thing her daughter loved.

Her eyes filled. "My poor, warm-hearted, motherless boy," she said, "pray for my husband's safe return! For on that your happiness depends: and hers. And mine."

So now two more bright eyes looked longingly seaward for the Agra; homeward bound.

BEHIND THE CURTAIN.

A VAUDEVILLE is a short French dramatic composition, spoken and sung, much resembling our old-fashioned Afterpiece "with songs," except that it is often employed as a "Lever du Rideau," or Curtain-Raiser. The singing, too, is much less formally introduced. The actors pass from singing to speaking, and from speaking to singing, without any pause, as if they were doing so merely for their own amusement, or as if the song were a continuation of the speech. The couplets, indeed, carry on the plot almost as much as the dialogue. The characters are a party of merry magpies, who chirp or chatter, who whistle or prate, just as the whim seizes them. The great points in vaudeville acting are to be sprightly, natural, and gay—unless the part require the actor to exhibit clever dulness and witty stupidity.

The vaudeville is said to be of Norman origin. There is a pleasant old town called Vire, with a brawling stream rushing through it, where it is the fashion not to breakfast, but to make up for the privation by eating two dinners per day. It is a land flowing with milk and honey, and absolutely inundated with cyder. In its immediate environs are two wooded valleys, renowned of old as "Les Vaux de Vire," whither the townsfolk used to resort to make merry with dancing, drinking, and singing. The songs composed in and for the festive meetings of the Vaux de Vire, became in time so popular that, by a bold etymological leap, a little drama, half made up of couplets, and which is now a national institution, received the title of Vaudeville. But before assuming the proportions of a theatrical piece, the vaudeville, for centuries, was no more than a satirical song called forth by the circumstances of the day, in which the people avenged themselves of the ill treatment they received from their rulers. One Paris theatre, in the Place de la Bourse, takes its name from, and is devoted to, vaudeville espe-

cially; but vaudevilles flourish and are enjoyed in all the secondary theatres of the French metropolis.

Asketch of the principal vaudeville writers has just been published by M. de Rochefort, himself a distinguished vaudevilliste, who has been either the collaborateur or the friend of all the vaudevillistes of his time. With one great exception, Eugène Scribe, these writers bear a wonderful family likeness; they were all so merry, so witty, so poor, and most of them, report says, so frightfully ugly. Vaudeville writing appears to be either the last resource of prodigality reduced to straits, or else a passion which holds complete dominion over its enraptured votary. M. de Rochefort himself gave up government employment to pursue the pleasures of dramatic authorship. He preceded his literary career by official travels in foreign countries. Mosquitoes stung him before critics did. He had inhaled the perfume of orange groves long before he sniffed and preferred the smell of lamps and orange-peel.

His own biography is brief but remarkable. He was all but born in the prisons of the Reign of Terror: having spent the first two years of his life there, in company with his mother, a strong courageous woman, who was condemned to the guillotine, and whose execution was only prevented by the death of Robespierre. After their liberation from prison, the family were completely ruined. The boy was sent to the Orleans Grammar School, where his education was interrupted by a long illness, in which he had a narrow escape from death. At the age of fifteen he entered the office of the Minister of the Interior, after serving for some time as clerk to a bookseller. But having contrived to get a piece played at the Vaudeville Theatre, all the other office clerks treated him as if he had the plague. The still more decided success of a second vaudeville converted him into a perfect pariah. He sent in his resignation, and started with the governor of the Ile Bourbon in the capacity of secretary.

As secretary, M. de Rochefort bore the whole weight of government on his shoulders. The governor fell ill with the gout, and was confined to his bed for eleven months at a single spell. Two years of this work tired the secretary out. Besides, as he remarks, pleasure, in the colonies, is suppressed; your only amusement is to look at the sky, bask in the sun, or doze in a hammock. Seized with invincible nostalgia, he begged the governor to send him back to France. The governor, only two days afterwards, followed his secretary's example, and solicited his own recall. Anywhere but in Paris, they felt themselves to be fish out of water. Their natural history studies had been limited to tasting roast monkey and stewed parrot. The ex-secretary was successively charged to write the theatrical reports of two grand journals which were extinguished by the revolution of July. Finally, slipping into his congenial element, he became a professional manufacturer of vaudevilles; but

the income so earned was not enormous, because managers had their favourites then, as managers have their favourites now.

Aude, the first of M. de Rochefort's portraits, boasted of having been secretary to Buffon. He dressed so shabbily, that the children in the streets ran after him to throw stones at him. The leading adventure of his life was this: One day, in a public-house in Belleville, he was meditating on an empty bottle. Beside him were a blacksmith and his wife, who drank till they quarrelled, and quarrelled till they fought. Aude rose and offered his mediation. The husband, without paying the slightest attention, continued his matrimonial discipline, exclaiming, "Mon Dieu! Who will rid me of this woman? I would let her go cheap."

Aude, illumined with a bright idea, inquired, "What will you take for her?"

"Whatever anybody is fool enough to give."

"Is it a bargain for thirty francs?"

"Certainly. Down with them. Take her, and be off with you."

The poor woman, subject to daily beatings, made no difficulty in following her purchaser. The pair dwelt in a cottage, like Philemon and Baucis, happily, for five-and-twenty years.

At one time, Aude worked in partnership, and lived with a fellow-vaudevilliste, Dornigny, who was a natural son of Louis the Fifteenth. Their joint worldly wealth was such, that, on one occasion, they had only one suit of clothes between them. The unclad partner had to lie in bed while the other took his walks abroad. A propos of a writer named Sewrin, M. de Rochefort has forgotten to mention that a tambourine figures in every one of his (Sewrin's) pieces.

Brazier, another prolific vaudevilliste, was for a time librarian to the Arsenal, but was dismissed for incompatibility with scientific pursuits. While there, he wrote inside his hat, "Ex libris Brazier"—This book belongs to Brazier. He then got employment on a journal as a collector of the small misfortunes which happen in Paris, at the rate of three francs per misfortune. He was a boon companion, who enjoyed life while hunting up crimes and accidents. The greater the abundance of fires and murders, the more luxurious was his fare.

One evening, he entered the green-room of the Variétés with such delight depicted on his countenance, that his friends took it for granted that he had had a new piece received by the committee, and complimented him accordingly.

"It is not that," he said. "It is quite a different affair which puts me in spirits. I had promised my wife to take her into the country to-morrow; but all the cash we could muster between us was eighteen francs, which was not enough. Providence led me to the Palais de Justice, where I learnt that an individual, coming down the grand staircase, had just broken his leg. Noting the fact, I followed the Quays to the Rue Dauphine, where I saw a crowd. I had the good luck to learn that a woman had been thrown down and severely bruised by a cart laden with stones. I ran off

to my journal with these two misfortunes, which completed the sum of twenty-four francs; and I have had the pleasure of informing my wife that she shall go into the country to-morrow."

These temporary resources did not suffice to render Brazier independent of the theatre. He eventually devoted himself entirely to vaudeville, which brought him great applause, if not much money; for Scribe had not yet regulated the rights of dramatic authors.

Madame de la Sablière relates that, crossing the garden of the Tuileries one morning to go to Versailles, she saw La Fontaine deep in his meditations, leaning against a tree. When she came back in the evening, she found him still in the same place; and it had been raining hard all day! The same was the case with Brazier. Frost, sunshine, hail, or snow, did not prevent his wandering along the Boulevards, *coupletting* with all his might and main. He was a victim vowed to verses of eight syllables. If he happened to meet one of his friends, he pulled his hat over his eyes to pass unnoticed, for fear of losing a rhyme.

In like manner, Théaulon improvised hundreds of little dramas as he walked the streets. Calderon's or Lope de Vega's fecundity was nothing in comparison to his. Whatever he touched turned to vaudeville or comedy. He has been seen to write the complete plan of a dramatic piece while he breakfasted, with more than twenty people talking around him—even with him—without troubling the course of his ideas. He ought to have earned a deal of money; no one knew what became of it; but it is supposed that he sold his copyrights for low prices to usurers. In a few years, he quite forgot his most charming comedies. He has been caught applauding a piece of his own writing; the name of the author had entirely slipped his memory. When he died, he was writing a vaudeville. Twenty-four hours scarcely intervened between his last song and the *De Profundis*, the final couplet of human life.

Augustin Hapdé was a pensive little man, holding his head on one side like Frederick the Great, only he was no flute-player, as the King of Prussia was. He never uttered a syllable to any one except concerning the getting up of his pieces, in which art his talents were supreme. He had scarcely risen above the second class of dramatic purveyors to the Ambigu and the Gaité, when he obtained the privilege of establishing at the Porte Saint Martin, the Théâtre des Jeux Gymniques. He was allowed to perform pantomimes only and vaudevilles with two actors. His pantomimes were composed on the largest scale, in accordance with the dimensions of his theatre. One bold idea occurred to him; namely, to make the Emperor Napoleon a prominent character in one of his productions. The master of so many vanquished kings was then shining in all his glory. The author's project was executed under the title of "The Man of Destiny." An actor named Chevalier was found, who, by a lucky chance, bore a striking likeness to the emperor.

It is impossible to form an idea of the ex-

citement and surprise this exhibition caused. It was remembered, indeed, that Louis the Fourteenth had been put upon the stage by Racine in his *Berenice*; but it was only metaphorically, as it were, by allusion and implication. Here, the living sovereign of France was brought upon the boards of a theatre, reproduced with his exact costume, his abrupt and convulsive gestures, making the illusion perfectly complete. Nobody could understand how the dramatic censors could have committed the enormity of licensing personalities which might call forth hostile manifestations in the pit. Hapd , however, contrived to triumph over all these apprehensions; and the public curiosity, excited to the utmost, converted the experiment into an immense pecuniary success. So great, indeed, was the success, that Napoleon wished to witness it, incognito. One evening, he and Duroc proceeded mysteriously to the Porte Saint Martin, disguised, and in a hackney-coach. A box of the Premiers, the only one remaining vacant, was taken at the box-office. The emperor hastily entered it, and fell into a violent rage at finding his shoes and stockings daubed with paste and paint. Some workmen who were refreshing the decorations of the theatre had left their pots in that unlucky box. The emperor went away in a fury, without remaining to see the piece, which was stopped the next day. It was another instance of great effects produced by little causes. The check-takers had recognised the tenant of the box from his energetic style of diction. Great confusion behind the scenes; the manager in utter despair. Next morning he started for Fontainebleau, where the court happened to be at the time. But all his pleadings were in vain; the angry chief was inexorable, and the prohibition was maintained.

At the Restoration, Hapd  disappeared from stage life. He wrote pamphlets against *The Man of Destiny*, of whom he had hitherto been the flatterer. The theatre of the Porte Saint Martin ceased to be mute. It recovered its speech with pure melodrama.

After passing the authors in review, a few anecdotes are given of their interpreters. Actors, in the bad old times, were subjected to a cruel proscription; harsh and ridiculous prejudices completely cut them off from society. The clergy were the first to set the intolerant example; forgetting that two comedians of antiquity, Genestus and Pelagie, figure in the *Legends of the Saints*; and also that it was a cardinal, one Richelieu, who founded the theatre in France, and rescued it from wandering buffoons, who personated the Deity and his Angels with impunity—that Moli re was admitted to Louis the Fourteenth's table—and that Justinian, the great lawgiver, married an actress, who exercised over him an influence equal to that with which Aspasia governed Pericles. These prejudices exist no longer. They were all the more unjust, because several actors were likewise eminent as authors. It suffices to mention the name of Moli re.

The actresses of the Vaudeville resembled a bouquet of flowers. Beauty had established her empire in that happy theatre. With such resources at their command, authors could hardly avoid succeeding. As soon as the ladies appeared on the stage, the spectators fell in love with them—and what we love we always applaud. The same materials still exist; but it is doubtful whether writers of the present day make an equally skilful use of them. On the stage, nothing triumphs like beauty. M. de Rochefort analogically illustrates his axiom by an anecdote.

When Talleyrand was minister, he was waited on one day by a young man of distinction, who presented a pressing recommendation from the Empress Josephine. She solicited for him a secretaryship to an embassy.

"Have you studied diplomacy?" inquired M. de Talleyrand.

"Yes, monseigneur. It has hitherto been my sole occupation."

"Very well, monsieur. The office of secretary to the Swedish embassy is just now vacant; I promise you shall have it. Good morning. I will shortly send your nomination."

The young gentleman was retiring, after overwhelming the minister with thanks, when the latter called him back, and asked, "Monsieur, are you usually lucky?"

"Alas! no, monseigneur. I have tried fortune in various ways, but as yet have never been able to succeed."

"In that case, monsieur, I am extremely sorry; but what has passed between us goes for nothing. *I must have lucky people.*"

It is a terrible truth to apply to actresses, but a manager *must have pretty women*.

English playgoers have no idea of old French bigotry respecting the three Dramatic Unities of time, place, and action—one action, in one locality, within four-and-twenty hours. It was a matter of faith rather than a rule of criticism. It was clung to with the persistence with which a Church maintains her dogmas. At the epoch when Lemercier's Christopher Columbus was represented at the Od on, the Parisian students were as classical as they are romantic, or rather tolerant, now. At that time, the violation of the unities was regarded as a heinous crime.

Nevertheless, they might have expected that the author, when he put the great Genoese on the stage, could not leave him at Isabel's court for three long acts, with nothing to do but to prepare for his voyage. This consideration had no effect on the hot-headed youth who filled the pit. When the second act displayed the bold discoverer out at sea on the deck of his ship, a furious storm burst forth in the theatre. The guard took part in it; the son of V ral, the inspector of police, had his arm broken in the row; M. de Rochefort, who supported the piece, escaped with the loss of his hat; three hundred students were arrested, and the emperor had them immediately incorporated in the army, inflexibly refusing to listen to any remon-

strance. He suppressed the Dramatic Unity Riots, by a slight foretaste of Russian recruiting in Poland.

Dramatic writers may, perhaps, have been themselves a little dramatised. It is said that one writer, finding his sight beginning to fail him, went to consult an oculist whose celebrity was confined to the advertisements which he caused to appear in the newspapers. The medical man, after inspection, came to the conclusion that it was passing ophthalmia without danger, and, indeed, of no importance. They continued to chat upon the subject, growing more and more familiar.

"Monsieur," said the oculist, "I have invented an ointment which would have restored Tobias's sight without troubling either angel or fish. But I have not yet tried it on any patient, and I would give a handsome *douceur* to whomsoever would submit to the experiment."

"How much would you give?" inquired the writer.

"A hundred francs."

"Per month?"

"Per month."

"I accept the bargain, if it is good for a year. I am your blind man during that period. You will undertake to furnish the dog."

The oculist, foreseeing the publicity that would be the consequence of such a cure, did not hesitate. The scribe appeared in his new character, in all the public places of Paris. At the close of the year, when the world was persuaded that the patient was afflicted with hopeless blindness, the oculist observed that it was time to look sharp, the term of the agreement having expired. The writer, however, refused to recover his sight, threatening to expose the charlatan, unless he came down with two years' indemnity. A long and loud discussion concluded with the payment of the sum demanded. The experiment was performed in public. The patient was duly *ointmented* in the presence of numerous witnesses;—and the remedy rendered him really blind.

The famous Count Rostopchin, who set fire to Moscow, was a frequent visitor behind the scenes and in the green-room of the Variétés. He was a colossus, with a head like Holophernes, and great fiery eyes, which might inspire fear at first sight; nevertheless he was mild, polite, and very amiable. A piece called Werther was then under rehearsal. It was a parody of the notorious novel, and excited uproarious laughter. The count was constant in his attendance at the rehearsals, and eagerly awaited the first performance, which was delayed by the continued success of one of Scribe's charming pieces. Meanwhile, the Emperor of Russia ordered him to return to Moscow; and there was no choice but to obey. On reaching Weimar, he heard that Werther had actually been brought out; so he returned to Paris, and remained there three months, witnessing the performance every night. Rostopchin entertained a great antipathy towards Goethe and the whole school of German literature. He detested its cloudy dreaminess, and spoke of

Goethe as a profound and perfect egotist: comparing him to that bit of old cracked china, Fontenelle, who preserved himself in cotton wool, in his academic chair, for a hundred years.

The parody of Werther became the cause of a still greater scandal. When Madame Catalini went to sing at Munich, she visited the lions of the Bavarian capital, and amongst others the author of Faust and Werther.

"Ah, Monsieur Goethe," she exclaimed, as she entered, "I saw your Werther at the Variétés! Allow me to congratulate you. It made me laugh till I cried again."

At this speech, Goethe's countenance turned as black as thunder. Without replying a single word, he motioned to the songstress to leave the room. The mistake was afterwards explained.

Among the performers of the Vaudeville Theatre, there was one, named Chapelle, who played Pantaloons and stupid old men to the life. And, indeed, he was naturally simple and credulous. Before taking to the stage, he had been a grocer in the Rue St. Honoré, and for some little time he combined shopkeeping with dramatic pursuits; but eventually he became bankrupt, and gave up his sugar and spice to his creditors. Laporte, the harlequin, had such influence over him that he could make him believe whatever he chose. Once, when it had been raining all day long, Laporte told him that an immense crowd had assembled in the square of the Palais Royal to see a very fine carp which was swimming down the kennel. Chapelle, who was dressed as Pantaloon, and was waiting to go on the stage, rushed out of the house to have a look at the wonderful fish. He asked everybody where it was, and people only laughed in his face. On returning, he found the curtain raised; he had missed his entry, and had to pay a fine.

One morning, Laporte arrived to rehearse a piece in which Chapelle had a part; and, as his faith began to be shaken, although he was still extremely inquisitive, the harlequin, addressing one of his comrades, recounted confidentially that he had just seen in the Rue Notre Dame des Victoires a new-fashioned diligence made of elastic gum, which had the great advantage of expanding at pleasure, so as to hold any number of passengers. Chapelle did not lose a syllable of the secret. As soon as the rehearsal was over, he betook himself by stealth to the coach-office. Laporte, expecting that he would do so, got there before him, in a disguise which prevented his being recognised. Chapelle made his way into the yard, looked about him, and, not perceiving the object of his search, went up to Laporte himself to inquire where the elastic diligence was. "It has just started for the Pays des Crétins (or for Idiot Town)," his comrade replied. "If you had been a little earlier, there was room for you." Satisfied with the answer, he went his way; but in the evening, he asked every one in the theatre where Idiot Town was. Some said it was in the Valais; another, less scrupulous, told him that it was No. 12, Rue de Chartres, which was the

house in which Chapelle lodged. They were not sure that he ever comprehended the mystification.

A very remarkable actor at the Vaudeville, but remarkable for quite another sort of qualities, was Vertpré, the father of the charming Jenny. Noble characters, historical personages, were rendered by him with a perfection of truthfulness which made him a great favourite with the public. The end of his career was sad. He was smitten with insanity while playing a vaudeville entitled Fontenelle. The same terrible accident has happened more than once to actors. It occurred in a little one-act piece, on the slavery of Regnard, the poet, in Algiers, which M. de Rochefort wrote for the Variétés. Léonard Tousez, who played the part of Regnard, stopped short in the middle of a couplet. He recommenced it three times, but could not finish it. He was obliged to retreat behind the scenes, and, next day, into a lunatic asylum.

The number of dramatic victims in France is very considerable. M. de Rochefort believes that actresses are less subject than actors to this sad affliction. Nevertheless, not long ago, a provincial actress of great merit was suddenly stopped in her part, on the stage, by mental derangement. The previous evening, she had regretted the thinness of the house, because, she said, she never felt herself in better train for acting. Her comrades also stated that on that last occasion she surpassed herself.

THE SUNKEN CITY.

By day it lies hidden and lurks beneath
The ripples that laugh with light;
But calmly, and clearly, and coldly as death,
It glooms into shape by night,
When none but the awful Heavens and me
Can look on the City that's sunk in the Sea.

Many a Castle I built in the air;
Towers that gleamed in the sun;
Spires that soared so stately and fair
They touched heaven every one,
Lie under the waters that mournfully
Closed over the City that's sunk in the Sea:

Many fine houses, but never a Home;
Windows, and no live face!
Doors set wide where no beating hearts come;
No voice is heard in the place:
It sleeps in the arms of Eternity—
The silent City that's sunk in the Sea.

There the face of my dead love lies,
Embalmed in the bitterest tears;
No breath on the lips! no smile in the eyes,
Tho' you watcht for years and years:
And the dear drowned eyes never close from me,—
Looking up from the City that's sunk in the sea.

Two of the bonniest Birds of God
That ever warmed human heart
For a nest, till they fluttered their wings abroad,
Lie there in their chambers apart,—
Dead! yet pleading most piteously
In the lonesome City that's sunk in the Sea.

And oh! the brave ventures there lying in wreck,
Dark on that shore of the Lost!
Gone down, with every hope on deck,
When all-sail for a glorious coast,
And the waves go sparkling splendidly
Over the City that's sunk in the Sea.

Then I look from my City that's sunk in the Sea,
To that Star-Chamber overhead;
And torturingly they question me—
"What of this world of the dead
That lies out of sight, and how will it be
With the City and thee, when there's *no more sea*?"

WHITSUNTIDE IN THE COUNTRY.

OUR Chicklebury club holds its annual re-joining every Whitsuntide between the falling of the May blossom and the coming on of the hay harvest. Sun or rain, hot or cold, the club dinner, the two club suppers, the procession, and the dance, take place at Dowton Parva.

The earliest indication of the coming feast breaks out in the beginning of May, when glossy streamers of red and blue begin to show in bouquets in the shop windows at Swallowtown, the post-town and market-town of our district of Downshire: a place consisting of long straggling streets of two rows of dull bald-looking stone houses, that stand silently staring at each other from century to century, like stupid guests at a stupid dinner-party. Those cockades that look so like dahlias, and those streamers of blue and red ribands so much resembling those worn by the recruits of her Majesty's regiments of the line, are the Chicklebury club colours, and are intended to decorate the bosoms and rusty-brown hats of the members of the "Royal Good Samaritan Mutual Aid Society."

When, I say, the hawthorn blossom has fallen from the hedges, like a shroud suddenly removed; when the fresh vigorous spring leaps from under, blithe and gay, and laughing in the happy sunshine; when on rainy days the mower, just for preparation, already whets his long curved scythe for the hay; when the blackbird begins to sharpen his orange beak, for the cherries begin to darken, when the green corn is a foot or more high, when the young birds begin to find their legs, when the grass begins to plume and flower, and the clover to sweeten and purple; then does the country mind begin to look forward to the club dinner. Then, across the rolling green prairies of corn rises to the shepherd's memory the scent of roast meat, and the scented vapour of the eighteen-pounder plum-pudding; then, to the driver in the little white tilt cart, the very wayside flowers round Dowton Parva seem by strange magic to exhale the odour of boiled savoy, and the furze blossom itself to forget its almond scent and to breathe forth the perfume of enormous veal-pies.

About a month before Whitsuntide, the female farm-servants begin to be seized with strong migratory instinct, and the overhauling of blue bonnet-boxes and old chests is a constant employment in the spring evenings. The talk,

coming home from church, of the glossy-haired servant-girls who carry their prayer-books folded up square in their clean white pocket-handkerchiefs, as religiously as if that mode of preserving the book and dirtying the handkerchief had been commanded by statute, has been about the club dance, the club holiday, the club colours, the club booth, the prospect of good weather for the club. For, Whitsuntide is the time when lovers meet, when brothers from distant farms see each other, when old father is sent for, when mother has a new shawl, when sister comes from her place, when uncle comes down from London, when children get new clothes. It is the court-ing time, the time for making friends, the time for love, peace, and general good will.

A holiday to be really enjoyed must be well-earned. The Italians enjoy their carnival the more because they are a priest-ridden people; the Londoner enjoys the Derby-day because all the other three hundred and sixty-four days of the year he works with his nose at the desk, and in a bad atmosphere. So, the Downshire shepherds work hard and live hard all the year, and enjoy the club week all the better for it. To many of them, the club dinner is the only dinner at which in the whole year they have their real satisfaction of good butcher's meat, well cooked. To most, it is the only week in the year of real freedom, contentment, society, and happiness. The love of society, independence, and good and plentiful food, is by no means confined to rich people. The love may be stunted in the poor man's mind, as the fish in dark cavern rivers become blind from not using their eyes; but the love is still in the poor man, as the eye is still in the fish.

The week before Whitsuntide, the symptoms begin to increase. On every white Downshire road you meet bands of wives and mothers and children, going to Swallowtown, shopping—to buy large-patterned gowns and flowered waistcoats, and those traditional white thin shawls with Indian patterns, peculiar to labourers' wives, and seldom seen in towns. Now, the older people on these expeditions carry large wicker baskets, through the looped handles of which their arms run; and they bear, whatever the weather, globular gig-umbrellas, with much shining brass-work about the black hooked handles; and the children run on before and chase birds, and fall into ditches, and linger at dangerous ponds, and give their mothers mingled horror and pleasure in large alternate doses. The children are clear-eyed and bright-eyed as angels, and nothing can match the purity of their complexions but the pearly-pink leaves of the wild dog-roses; and the daughters are trim and neat-waisted, and walk with a pretty innocent self-consciousness. The shopping is a painfully pleasant business. There is a sense of pride and importance about it, tempered with anxiety about the bargain. The shopman with rustic flattery pours out his variegated stores before the cheery country people, and extracts from them, not merely their coin but also their lavish admiration.

Another symptom of the coming rejoicing, also perceptible about this time, is of a more painful nature. It consists in dreadful shrieks, and whistles, and sounds like the beating in of an old hat; this, I am told, is the club band practising. Those sounds of ill omen are heard nightly above the church bells, and they lead the listener's mind to longings for "a lodge" in some vast wilderness. The sounds die away at nightfall, and the brown owl then hoots in triumph through the welcome silence. The night is spent in dream dinners, in dream speeches, and dream dances. But the longest nights must have an end, and daybreak at last comes and turns dreams into reality. The blue coat of singular and expensive cut, with buttons bright as gold, the flowered waistcoats, the new "cords," and, above all, the red and blue ribands are put on, and, as the bells begin to "ching-chang," the members of "The Good Samaritan Mutual Benefit Society" meet at Colonel Hanger's park gate.

Just under that great arch of rustic work, with the giant's head on the keystone, which Pitt, and Lord Nelson, and many wise, and brave, and beautiful have passed under, is the rendezvous place of the Downshire self-helping Samaritans. Those busy men with blue wands, who act as sheep dogs, drive on the loiterers, and keep the whole band together, are the stewards—officers elected by turns, and liable to be fined if they refuse to serve. The members of this club are all men, but there are female clubs in Downshire; for there was one at Dufferton where I once lived, and it gave a handsome reward to every housemaid who had kept in good health for twenty years, and it refused to admit my cook because she had once had the ague. That good-natured moon-faced fellow is the treasurer, and the parish clerk to boot; he is the leader and fogleman of the whole. That handsome old man, his father, with the colours at his button-hole, who, nearly bent double, paces along so sturdily, and with his stick in one hand walks along with pride in the van of all the "Royal Samaritans," has walked with that club thirty years, and as no one else present has been at so many anniversaries, he is proud of that simple distinction.

The band of six performers wear blue caps with white lace round them, and blue trousers with white stripes down the sides, and, though a little heavy-footed and dragging in their walk, have a quasi-military air, as they drum and toot and blow and blast, with great vigour and much spirited independence of one another. And now, as the church bell calls more querulously, the procession, which began by marching dead away from the village (steered by the men with the blue wands), suddenly makes a masterly loop turn, and, recoiling on itself, sweeps round the road towards the church, heralded by the band exultingly strolling and triumphant, with an irrelevant tune—Paddy will you now? or The girl I left behind me—and so paganly bursting out its content, the Royal Samaritans file into the churchyard, driven in, as it were, by the sight of the rector, who,

in full sail, with white gown and crimson Oxford hood heralically across, appears at his garden gate, making for the church porch. As rabbits into their holes at sight of a terrier, so do the Royal Samaritans make a dive at the church-door at sight of the Reverend Mr. St. Ives, with a blue and red cockade on his breast.

The organ bursts forth exultingly at the rector's entrance; all the blue and red ribands jostle and shake down by degrees into the various pews. It is a pleasant sight, the rows of grey and bald heads mingled with glossy curls and youth's plentiful hair-thatching. There is a good deal of violently subdued coughing; and now and then, perhaps, a Royal Samaritan's mind turns fondly to the thought of the roast beef on the spit; but the outward behaviour of every Samaritan is thoroughly decorous and praiseworthy. The text of the sermon is, "If one member suffer, all the members suffer with it;" an excellent text for a sermon to the House of Commons. It is an admirable, kindly, and right-feeling sermon, and is listened to attentively.

And then the congregation tumbles out, and the procession re-forms. The band plays a military air, and assumes a military air at the same time. The face of every "Royal Samaritan" turns to Dowton Parva. Every cloud that floats in the blue assumes to their eyes the shape of a round of beef, or a pudding. The goal of the procession is the Dark Sun, at Dowton, where carpenters have for days been hammering at booths, or sitting down in paper caps over their work, to discuss the coming feast. Past closed barn doors, past silent corn-fields, the Royal Samaritans defile towards the Dark Sun, with banner flying, band playing, and red and blue ribands streaming in the sun; and now, breaking the ranks, comes Squire Hanger in his dog-cart, spanking along and greeting all he meets. He is to be chairman at the dinner, and, like the rector, who is with him, he wears a cockade at his button-hole.

Such queer old heads in the procession, food for Hogarth, fit for Leech—heads such as lively fancy sees on old stained walls, or on tree-knots—honest tough shrewd heads, gnarled by many a summer's sun and winter's storm, many a long vigil at lambing season, many a long night-watch in pheasant season, many a tough wrangling bargain in corn-market, many a lingering conflict over fat oxen and droves of Downshire sheep. Two and two these quaint old heads reach the Dark Sun, and group on the strip of turf near the skittle-alley. In the mean time, by various roads and converging paths, the gentry (honorary members) and stray subscribers have dropped in; the landlord is in the doorway, frank in his welcome; the club doctor, in high riding-boots, and with a whip, useful to rap out the leading incident of a story, is already in the best parlour; and so are one or two gentlemen farmers from lovely Down farms islanded among fir plantations, and who are examining with extreme interest some highly-coloured prints, known respectively as "The Fox-Hunter's Death" and

"The First Partridge." Out in the kitchen are one or two casual customers, who, undisturbed by the general festivity, hew away with clasp-knives at wedges of bread and bacon, and converse fitfully, with long and dreary silences between, somewhat in this way:

First Casual. "I think the weather's taking up."

Three bars' rest.

Second Casual. "O yes, that's right. It do."

Or, the landlord volunteers a story about the gun over the mantelpiece, and reports to the company that "it do drow the shot as close as he never saw any other gun drow the shot," and he has therefore christened it "the Smasher." If there be anything otherwise remarkable about these casual visitors, it is that they assume rather an injured air, as if the club feast had no right to be there at all.

Outside on the turf the ribands give the assembled company the effect of a regiment of recruits. Really, though their dress is rude, and their legs are of all varieties of rheumatic twist and bend, the Royal Samaritans behave very much as Belgriavians, or any other Ians, behave when they are waiting for dinner. They chat in clumps, they try to appear interested in each other's small-talk, and assume an entire indifference to the one thought that pervades every mind—dinner. Squire Hanger's keeper, a tall man, is there in drab gaiters, russet hat, and a tail-coat, with the shortest tails, I think, I ever saw, except in an unfledged sparrow; but still the coat gives him an air of society, of which he is fully conscious. N.B. From constantly being shut in shooting, the keeper's left eye has a habit of only half opening: a habit, however, thoroughly compensated for by the extremely bright vigilance of its companion.

Suddenly a thrill goes through the red and blue ribands. The dinner is served. Now, at last the mask is off, the blinds are pulled up, and there is no attempt in any man to conceal his feelings. There is a stolid frank delight on every face; a calm pressing forward to the dining-table. And really their pleasure is not without its dignity—good transparent-hearted men, one can see exactly what they think. They are saying to themselves, "We are poor men—very poor, most of us—but we are no beggars, we don't come here to crave any one's hospitality, we are going to a downright good dinner earned by our own hands and paid for by ourselves, and we need thank no one for it but ourselves." There is always a slight sour in the blood of your true Englishman.

"Look at that old man in the blue coat," says Squire Hanger to me, as we move on towards the barn where we are to dine: pointing out a little cheery old man with winter-apple cheeks. "That man has been in my employ five-and-twenty years, and a better servant no one need wish. How d'y'e do, John?"

"Tidy, zur—tidy, zur! And how be you and missus?"

"Very well, thank you, John, considering we ain't so young as we were."

"Ah, zur! we do all *ged* on downwards like the cow's tail, don't we, zur?"

The dinner is held in the barn of the Dark Sun. One end of the barn—the road end—by a stroke of genius, has been removed, and the building carried on by a long dining-tent, such as Epsom Downs may boast on a Derby-day: so that the dinner, beginning under tiles, ends under canvas. Through the looped-up entrance we pass, and find (I am honorary member of the Royal Samaritans, with red and blue flowering at my button-hole) the tables laid the whole length of either side of the tent, and several crafty old Samaritans already in strong positions near the chief joints. There is a murmur of welcome as we all take our places, and the Reverend Mr. St. Ives rises and says something in a low voice to the huge sirloin of beef that smokes before him. Eighty of us look around us with pleased but avid eyes.

Now, far be it from me to deride the rustic hospitality of which I partake with so much good will and true enjoyment. Still, I cannot choke back a ludicrous thought or two at the oddity of the scene. Our hats are placed in the manger that runs behind us, and on a rafter high over Squire Hanger's head hangs a rusty seythe, like the sword of Damocles. Just behind us, to the right, is an open door leading out from the stable into the farm-yard, and through this door piles of plates, cans of beer, and huge loaves of bread, are constantly entering, as if they were endowed with the power of voluntary motion. At regular intervals down the table are acres of veal-pie, joints of beef and mutton, and broad dishes of potatoes and greens. Everything is rough, but everything is prodigal in quantity and excellent in quality. The treasurer and stewards have laid by their wands, and now in shirt-sleeves serve as waiters: running with a good-natured fury to fill every empty glass and replenish every empty plate. As at all rural club dinners, a dead and almost solemn silence prevails when the plates are first filled. It is not a dinner; it is a battle with hunger. There is no sound but the crescendo gurgling of beer-pouring, and the clatter of knives and forks. The only conversation consists in inquiries for salt, demands for potatoes, and praises of beef. The quantity eaten is great. Three times beef, and then a foot or two of veal-pie, is a mere average; six glasses of pure hard beer and a hatful of potatoes are nothing at all. Presently the good-natured landlord, almost worn out with helping to beef, comes round and hopes everything is to everybody's satisfaction: "which it is." There is great variety and character in the art of dining, as practised by the Royal Samaritans. Some begin harpooning likely potatoes before grace is said; others look out kindly for their friends' wants; some turn up their cuffs as if they were going to fell a tree; others pick and talk of earlier club days, days—better than are now prevalent: which the red-faced curly-headed fellows, unctuous with redundant fat of beef, don't care to contradict, and listen to over the

slanting tops of beer-tumblers. At last dinner is all but "worried down," as the keeper expresses it, and all tongues are loosed.

There is now a fresh tremor of pleasure as the eighteen-pounder puddings arrive, and are geometrised into melon-like sections. Never was such beef, never was such pudding. The squire's face beams at the pudding as if it were an old friend, the actual pudding of Christmas-time come again. The puddings melt like snow in thaw-time; and vigilant beer-bearers still keep on replenishing half-filled glasses with a dangerous anti-teetotal watchfulness. Grace again, and this time the Amen is uttered with a generous warmth and fulness of conviction that does credit to the Chicklebury head, heart, and stomach.

And now the cloth is drawn off, and long clean white pipes and "Waterloo charges" are laid on the table, and before each group are placed beer jugs and clean tumblers, and there is a laugh at one old shepherd, who clings to his jug and glass, and will allow no one to touch either, even under pretext of replenishing.

"Because," as he doggedly observes, "he do know that he shall get no other, if he once do lose sight of they."

The treasurer taps with a fork on the table. Silence for a speech from the squire! At once that jangle of voices dies away to a whisper, and all the red faces turn towards Squire Hanger.

The squire knuckles down his hand to the table, and looks hard and with extreme interest at a knot in the deal. Then all of a sudden, like half-dry powder, he blazes off and fires into a speech. He is happy to meet his tenants there that day. He is glad to see men helping themselves, remembering the good old proverb, "Who helps himself, God helps." He is glad, too, to hear that the club is flourishing, and that there have been fewer men on the sick-list this last year than the year before. He is glad to see round him faces to which he has been familiar from his boyhood, faces connected with his dearest memories of friends, and home, and native country. All he wishes is (here he took a sip of beer), that the gentlemen of England would oftener find opportunities to thus meet their poorer neighbours; as he is sure that such meetings tend to remove rankling feelings, to promote kindness and good will, and to draw closer the bonds that should unite neighbours and neighbours, landlord and tenant, master and servants.

The cheers are tremendous; the noise is like the springing of a mine; as for Farmer Hacker, he stoops nearly to the ground, and lading with his white hat as if he were baling out a boat, leads the cheering. Then Farmer Wilding rises and proposes the squire's health. Some other farmer proposes the landlord's health (him of the Dark Sun), and "thanks for a very good dinner," till at last nearly every one has risen and proposed somebody or something; and now, too, the treasurer begins to chink money together, and to pile little ominous heaps of half-crowns on the

table, and to rustle out papers, and, in fact, generally to intimate that the hour is come when the year's subscriptions ought to be paid. Honorary members must retire even from Royal Samaritan dinners, at some time or other, so I and Squire Hanger, with much hand-snaking and more cheering, mount our traps and roll homeward.

These solemn events take place in an hour or two. I am suddenly, as I sit at tea with my children, reminded of the existence of the Royal Samaritans, by a distant drumming scarcely louder than the drowsy buzz of the great orange-striped humble-bee, who frets in a large moss-rose that hangs against my window. But soon it widens out, and I gradually distinguish the wavering drone of the clarionets, the squeak of the "wry-necked" fifes, the blare of the sliding trombone, the "dub dub" of the baggy drum, and the blatant roar of the enormous serpent. Next I distinguish the top of the Royal Samaritan banner, and, through the laurels in the shrubbery, discern gleams of the well-known red and blue ribands. The sounds increase; the pleasant chatter and the cries of marshalling stewards draw nearer to the garden gate. It is flung open, and the Royal Samaritans enter. One or two have rather a fixed and watery stare about the eyes, which they attempt to turn into an expression of combined respect, wisdom, and admiration. The twos and twos widen out on the lawn, and the band begins to settle down to serious work. A grave barber runs up and down the flute; a blacksmith officiates at the clarinet, as like a blunderbuss as a harmless instrument can well be; the old serpent has a chair brought him, as his instrument is fatiguingly large, and requires support; the little drummer, with a slight aberration about the legs, plays with mechanical heedlessness, and perhaps with rather a want of force and emphasis in the staccato passages. The other performers have music-books held out before them by little country boys, who hold them above their heads with a fixed, religious, and undeviating care. Anon the gardener appears with a tray and glasses, a smiling handmaid follows with frothing jugs, and the aberrated eyes, *passim*, acquire for the moment a certain steadiness, and are fixed magnetically on the said jugs. I permeate among the crowd of Royal Samaritans and Royal Samaritans' wives and daughters, and talk about the dinner, and make conjectures about the weather, which is of a wintry-spring character, gusty and rainy, with a gleam of sunshine as brilliant and fitful as if it were turned on from a dark-lantern with the slide now pushed on and now pushed off; and all this time that I make great efforts to pump up small-talk, and show this Samaritan my cabbages, and that Samaritan my cabbages, a third Samaritan my cabbage-roses, and a fourth Samaritan my rosy-red cabbages, the treasurer pursues one traditional and unchanging line of patriotic action; he plants himself firmly with his heels screwed into my turf, and his back to my drawing-room window; he fixes the pole of the Royal Samaritan banner on his left hip, and then commences to wave the flag from left to

right as regular as a clock beats, whipping it round with a dexterous catch that so nearly resembles fly-fishing, that it might almost be mistaken for that amusement on a large scale, especially as the royal angler seems to exhaust all his skill in trying to fish off the tall white hat of an old shepherd who stands near him unmoved: efforts which at last are happily crowned with complete success.

Eventually, with three cheers and God save the Queen, the Royal Samaritans march off to supper at the Dark Sun. There, the wives and children join them, and there will be much jolting of skittles, great exhaustion of beer-casks, much ribanding of cold beef, much laughing, chattering, and fun; then, too, will come off the national dance of England, that tiresome heel-tapping shuffle of two rivals, who try to tire each other out, and who certainly tire out all but the most enthusiastic of the bystanders. Then, too, will take place a deal of ogling, and flirting, and heart-capturing, and jealousy, and sociability.

Nor will even this satisfy these untiring Royal Samaritans; for all to-morrow is to be holiday too, and to-morrow night there will be another supper, and after that, according to a curious old custom, the remainder of the meat will be put up to auction, and carried home for quiet and thoughtful discussion; and only, with the last mouthful of that meat, will end the Whitsuntide holiday at Chicklebury.

ITALIAN BRIGANDAGE.

THE ministerial papers, and indeed a large number of other journals, have uniformly asserted that this brigandage was fed, paid, and armed, from Rome; that Rome was its head-quarters and its refuge; that it was a Bourbonist scheme to maintain a state of trouble and disorder in the southern provinces of the kingdom, so that the scandal of this condition might serve to screen the iniquities of the past rule, and shame the severities of the present. They declared that the presence of the ex-king at Rome was a powerful support to this infamous warfare, and they more than hinted that the French garrison never lent that aid to its suppression which they might or could in their capacity of faithful allies of the kingdom of Italy.

This statement found its way into our own newspapers, and, indeed, figured in blue-books. Like most of such sweeping charges, it was a mixture of truth and falsehood. There was unquestionably imparted to the disturbances of the south such aid and encouragement as a baffled party and an exiled court could supply either in arms, money, or distinctive rewards. The Bourbonists saw very clearly that no more stunning refutation could be given to the boastful declarations of new Italy, than to point to the lawlessness of a vast region, and all the frightful cruelties practised to reduce it to obedience. If the press were to revert to the bygone atrocities of King Ferdinand, what answer could be so meet as to say, "Look at the Basilicata! Were whole villages

burned to the ground—were women and children massacred in *our* day? Which of us decreed that no peasant should go to his daily labour further than a certain distance from his dwelling, or that no peasant's wife, sister, or child, should carry to him the food for his humble meal?" With such rebutting charges as these did the exiled party meet all the accusations of their opponents.

To assert, however, that brigandage had its whole source or origin here, was totally untrue. Indeed, were it the fact, what would have been easier than repression? If the brigands issued from Rome, and Rome alone, an army of eighty thousand men could have drawn a cordon against them across the entire peninsula, where each sentinel would have been within hail of his neighbour. Eighty thousand soldiers might certainly have prevented the issue of four hundred ill-armed and undisciplined mountaineers. If Rome had been the centre of this insurrectionary movement, how was it that the whole Capitanata swarmed with brigands, and that Pillone carried his ravages to within a few miles of Naples? If, in a word, the movement were as despicable in numbers, organisation, and courage, as it was asserted to be, why could a larger army than Wellington led at Waterloo not suffice to crush it? These are questions which each Italian asked of his neighbour, and it was the difficulty thus indicated that called for this special commission.

Brigandage is a very ancient institution in the south of Italy. Every age and every government have known it. To a people estranged from intercourse with the civilised world, with few roads, and those of the very worst—indisposed to labour, reckless of lives that had little to cheer them, and credulously relying on the powers of the Church to absolve them from all consequences in the next world—such a mode of livelihood did not present many repugnant features. There was about it, too, a false air of heroism, which, to a highly imaginative and vainglorious race, has a great attraction. These same brigands exacted a deference from their honest equals, that recalls the habits of the mediæval barons. They were the terror of the country round them, and their black mail was paid with a punctuality unknown in the payment of government imposts. Their fondness for titles, and their assumption of military rank, show how these men prized social eminence, and what store they set upon those claims which exalted them above their fellows. Antonelli stipulated with the French general sent to confer with him, for the grade, and, stranger still, the uniform of a colonel! Chiavone, it is said, holds the commission of a major-general.

Brigandage, in a word, was a pursuit which offered very attractive and dazzling rewards, and no wonder is it that it should appeal successfully to those whose daily lives were lives of misery and want. Last of all, it brought no stigma of shame on those who followed it. They suffered nothing in fame or reputation. They lived heroes, and, if they died on the scaffold, they died martyrs. Brigandage en-

listed the bold, the daring, and the energetic; the men, in fact, who, under a happier system, would have constituted the distinguished persons of the neighbourhood. They were such as preferred peril to daily drudgery, and were willing to risk life, rather than lower it to the condition of a servitude. Such was the mode of reasoning, such the explanations, which every traveller in the Abruzzi will have heard over and over again from the lips of peasants. In the one single fact that it entailed no dishonour on him who followed it, no shame nor disgrace on his family or relations, lay its chief mischief. As in Ireland, where what are called agrarian crimes attach no infamy to him who commits them, the brigandage of Italy carries with it no legacy of discredit and dishonour. It is this which makes its suppression, not the act of an age nor an army, but the great political problem of regenerating a whole people. It is not that four hundred brigands have found occupation for an army of eighty thousand; but that a people who sympathise with brigandage, who submit with patience to its exactions, and who feel a sort of triumph in its successes—who regard its exercise as the struggle of poverty with riches—the duel between destitution and affluence—would rather aid it, succour it, and screen it, than help a government to suppress it. This is the reason why all attempts to exterminate it have proved failures. The State has not been able to bring that discredit on the crime which is the chief agent in repression. The Calabrese peasant screens the brigand, as the Tipperary man conceals the Whiteboy.

Probably no Italian government before the present day ever seriously contemplated dealing with brigandage. It is no part of our task to inquire whether, even now, the attempt would have been made if brigandage had not presented itself as the agent of a political party. As it is, the system has rendered Southern Italy ungovernable. Life and property are no longer secure, and Africa itself is a safer land for the traveller than certain districts of the Terra di Lavoro. The exactions of brigandage, not satisfied with contravening the law, have gone so far as to outrage and insult the law. But a few weeks ago, a person of high station and wealth was arrested within a few miles of Naples; and his ransom—fixed at the sum of nine thousand three hundred pounds sterling—was demanded formally at the bank, and paid over to one of the emissaries of the band, just as if the matter had been an ordinary commercial transaction.

It is absurd to speak of government where such atrocities exist unpunished. Proprietors in the south would no more presume to visit their estates than they would undertake an excursion among the Scioux or the Mandans. Only to the extent of a few leagues outside the capital, can safety be said to exist; and yet in the face of all this, we are gravely told that the brigands in the Neapolitan provinces are not over four hundred in number, and that even these are "as deficient in arms as in courage, and too con-

temptible to be called adversaries by the soldiers of the royal army."

It has been assumed from the first—it is not easy to say why—that the whole force and means of brigandage ought to be disparaged and ridiculed by the press. Instead of frankly declaring that the evil was one of magnitude, the journals have pretended to regard it as insignificant and contemptible, the passing manifestation of an interval of trouble and confusion, but no more. Let us, however, remember that brigandage is an old institution, with which successive governments have had to deal, some not very creditably, nor very loyally. Witness what occurred on the restoration of the Bourbons, when General Amato, sent to negotiate with Vanderelli, whose band at that time ravaged La Puglia, not only pledged himself that the past should be forgotten and pardoned, but that the band should be admitted into the king's service, and should have suitable pay, and be treated as a royal regiment. The terms were accepted, and Vanderelli, with his men, marched into Foggia to surrender and take the oath of allegiance. No sooner, however, had they piled their arms, than the troops opened a deadly fire upon them, and in a few minutes the ground was covered with their corpses—not a man escaped!

If the Bourbons, therefore, now employ the brigands as their partisans, it is not that the traditions of their own dealings with them are either honourable or very promising; but, on this head, perhaps the balance of treachery is pretty equal. The brigands have as often taken up arms against, as for, "their friends," the royalists. It is noteworthy, however, that when the country fell into the hands of France, the agents of the Empire were as much disposed "to treat" with brigandage as ever were the Italians themselves, of whatsoever party. Antonelli, a native of a little village not far from Lariano, was held of consequence enough to be made the subject of negotiations in which all the rights of an equal were extended to him by the French envoy.

That it may not be supposed that the treachery of the Bourbons was a weapon peculiar to power, it is right to record how a celebrated band which long held the country between Serra and Aspromonte, intimated their wish for submission, only stipulating that, as their chiefs desired, it might be made at night, and not in the face of the assembled populace. A certain house was fixed on, and thither the syndic and the colonel of the gendarmerie, a Frenchman named Gérard, repaired at an appointed time. The four or five brigand captains were equally punctual, but instead of at once acceding to the terms of which they themselves had made the conditions, they entered into tedious and frivolous details, discussing a variety of matters purely hypothetical. The dispute, as was intended, waxed warm. At a signal given, the bandits, who were near, surrounded the house and massacred the syndic, the commander, and all his staff. This atrocity, be it remarked, was never punished. The terror it spread far and near paralysed every one, and, for a considerable time, made the brigands mas-

ters of the whole district. Manhès decreed that the house where the bloody treachery occurred should be razed to the ground, but he was not obeyed. He went to the king, and asked what penalty should be exacted from the population. "Do whatever you think fit," said Murat, "but do it in person, and after having yourself inquired into all the facts."

Manhès set out for the village, where the "fanfarre" of his trumpets alone gave token of his approach, and the trembling inhabitants saw him enter, stern and dark-browed as an avenging angel. As he traversed the piazza, he saw that there hung from the trees, several human heads, half blackened and bloody, and these, he was told, were the vengeance executed upon the family to whom the house had belonged. Manhès turned away in disgust, and for twenty-four hours shut himself up alone in his room to meditate on the punishment to be inflicted. He summoned next day the whole population to the piazza, and they came in vast numbers; scarcely a man was absent. He harangued them at length; and, in terms the most cutting and offensive, he arraigned them as men equally destitute of courage and honour. "Not one of you," he said, "is guiltless, not one shall be spared." The terror may be imagined that followed such words as these. And now he hit upon a penalty which not even the Pope himself would have dared to enforce. "I ordain," cried he, in a voice of thunder, "that every church in Serra be closed, and that every priest leave this village and retire to Maida! Your children shall be born and no baptism await them, and your aged shall die without the sacrament, neither shall you escape to other villages or other lands, you shall live on here isolated, outcasts of God and man, and that one of you who shall be seen beyond the bounds of this spot shall be shot down like a wolf!"

He left the city with his escort after this terrible denunciation; but he had not gone many miles, when he found the way beset by the whole population, who, dressed in white, barefoot, and kneeling, besought him, with cries of agony, to have pity on them. "Kill us if you will, but let us not perish everlastingly!" Manhès turned away, inexorable, and spurred his horse to the gallop. Strange as it may seem, notwithstanding the efforts of the very highest of the clergy, and the interference of even princes of the Church, the sentence was executed, and every priest left the village. The measure was, however, crowned with a complete success. The people of Serra rose en masse, and gave chase to the brigands. It was war to the knife, without pity and without quarter, and it never ceased until the last robber was slain or dead of hunger. The interdict was then removed, and from that day forth these villagers have been their own defenders, nor has a soldier ever been sent to protect them.

There is a very remarkable similarity between the times and circumstances in which Manhès acted thus, and those of our own day, wherein Cialdini commanded in the south; and not less striking is the resemblance in the character of

the two men. Stern soldiers both of them—severe, pitiless, and immovable. It is only the scene of the brigandage that is changed, for when Ferdinand the First conspired in Sicily the war was in Calabria. Now that Francis the Second inhabits Rome, it is in the Terra de Lavoro and the Abruzzi that the scourge is to be found. Of how little progress Italy can boast in the road of civilisation and legality since the commencement of the present century, this very parallel is the proof; for here we have the self-same pestilence and the self-same repression that we witnessed more than fifty years ago. The same baseness and the same crime, the same insecurity, and the same severities. The frequent changes of government in Southern Italy have favoured this downward tendency; for, with the fall of each, came an interregnum of disorder and turbulence, when the jails gave up their prisoners, and the robber bands got recruited from the lowest classes of the people. In these struggles the party of least power never scrupled to avail itself of such aid as even brigandage could offer, and this alone served to elevate the brigand into a position of political importance, and to dignify him with a station to which he had no real pretension. Italy has many royalists—many faithful and attached friends of the old monarchy—many men of honourable fidelity to the throne, around which their fathers and grandfathers stood as defenders—but she has no La Vendée; that is to say, there is no vast region in which the sentiments of loyalty to a sovereign are as an element of faith and a religious belief. There is not in Italy, as there once was in France, a great area in which the exiled king was still recognised as the true sovereign, and where all the power of his enemies was deemed the accidental tyranny of usurpers. With all his remoteness from the great centre of political illumination, the Vendean peasant knew what he was fighting for, and felt that the blood of St. Louis demanded an expiation. It is not to be supposed that the Calabrian or Abruzzese does this. A few, and a very few, of those in arms affect to be partisans of the Bourbons; but the greater number are as indifferent who rules the realm as to whom may be the Tycoon of Japan.

A great impulse was unquestionably given to the latter brigandage of Italy by the difficulty in which the government succeeding to the Garibaldian expedition found itself with regard to the liberated prisoners. As Garibaldi advanced, the jails were all broken open, and the accused and the guilty were alike indiscriminately set free. The State could scarcely accept the services of such men, and yet what were the men to do? If honest labour were denied them, there was no other road but the road of crime. When Cipriano della Gala presented himself to the authorities—a well-known highwayman, and of proved courage—he asked to be employed against the brigands. The government officials, instead of employing him, re-conducted him to jail. From that hour forth, every escaped felon took to the high road.

Excluded from all hope of pardon, they accepted lives of peril, as the last and only issue left them.

For the disbanded soldiers of the late royal army no future was prepared; at least none that could in any way be palatable to them. Accustomed to lives of indolence and ease, either in distant detachments or garrison duty, they frankly owned that they had no fancy for service under a king so fond of fighting, and who was actually capable of "leading them against the Austrians;" not to add that the discipline of the northern army was more severe, and the pay smaller. To men of this stamp, brigandage appealed very forcibly. Of course it will always be a debatable question to what extent fidelity to the late king had a share in these motives, and one must expect two very different answers from the opposed partisans. The great probability, however, is, that very few thought of anything but subsistence.

To listen to the descriptions given of these wretched creatures by the officers of the royal army, is to believe them in the lowest state of destitution and want. Covered with rags, pale with famine, scarcely able to crawl from debility, it seems almost a barbarous cruelty to hunt down to death, objects so contemptible and so unequal to all resistance. This is not, however, the picture which the press presents of them; nor is it at all like the swaggering insolent-looking fellow who parades the streets of Rome to-day, and to-morrow is heard of in the Terra di Lavoro. The truth probably lies between the two statements, or rather it embraces both; brigandage has its well-fed, well-clothed, and well-equipped followers, as also its poor-looking, squalid, and starving followers. It is no more limited to a class than it is confined to one political party. The syndic of one village, the curate of another, the tax-collector of a third, will have a son, a brother, or a brother-in-law, a bandit, and will see the government proclamation denouncing him on the wall before his window. Familiarised to brigandage by long habit—with ears that have listened to bandit adventures from childhood—he has no very great horror of the career, though he has a lively fear of what it may lead to. When the ministerial despatch reaches him to say that the "Seventy-fourth Regiment of the Line will despatch Company B of eighty-eight men, under command of Captain Annibale Almaforte, for whose billet and rations he will duly provide in his village, giving them, besides, all such aid and assistance as lie in his power to discover the haunts and exterminate the persons who compose the band of brigands under a chief called Crocco, or Stoppa, or Ninco Nanco," the zeal and alacrity he will lend to his task may be imagined if the aforesaid leader be his own brother or his son—ay, or even his cousin or his schoolfellow!

The unfortunate Piedmontese official sent down south to administer the affairs of some small town, to investigate its municipal accounts, and to restore some show of order to its finances, invariably writes back to Turin an entreaty that he may be recalled, and a representation that he is so thwarted, opposed, blinded, and deceived,

that he is sure to fail in his mission. The minister's table is said to be covered with such applications from men eager to get back to subordinate stations which they had filled with credit, rather than jeopardise character and reputation by the attempt to exercise authority where all around are pledged to mislead and betray them. It is, I am informed, to the wide prevalence of this spirit, irreconcilable with all law and order, that the report of the Commission on Brigandage is principally addressed. The fact that brigandage is not a disease, but the symptom of a disease, is now apparent enough; the root of the malady lies not in destitution, or poverty, or isolation, or ignorance, or disloyalty, but in the rottenness which all these corrupting influences have produced in a people whose civilisation was never so much as attempted, and whose Christianity never rose above a debtor and creditor account with their Creator—so many penances for so many perculations—so many masses for so many murders!

It is a slow process to change the hearts of a people. The commission hope much from railroads, from schools, and from general prosperity, and these are the only true and intelligent means of meeting the difficulty; but whether they will soon avail or not, Italy will indisputably have the benefit of a system which has abolished like evils elsewhere, and the time may not be remote when honourable labour will be found as profitable as highway robbery, and when even the Calabrian peasant may discover "honesty to be the best policy."

PARISH CHARITIES.

NEXT to the commandments, the huge oblong benefaction board occupies the most conspicuous position in our parish church. Painted black, and written in letters of dusty yellow, by the village painter and glazier of a great many years since, it commemorates at once the liberality and the orthography of bygone generations. Here we read how:

"Andreas Lovelace, gentleman, sometime High Sheriffe (with a long description of him and his belongings, that may be found in the county history), left to ye Poore of this Parish, x pounds lawfull coin of the realme, the interest of y^e same to be yearly distributed by the Minister and Churchwardens in bread, on the feast of St. Andrewe."

"Dame Joanna Lovelace, by a Codicil to her will, did bequeathe certain money, the yearly interest of which is at present xviii. shillings, to be given on New Year's day to the most deserving Poore of this Parish, by ye Parson and Churchwardens of Grumbleton."

"The Rev. Anthony Thomas, M.A., Rector, did by his will, dated 1753, give and bequeath to poor Inhabitants of the said Parish, 200*l*. the interest thereof to be annually given by the Minister and Churchwardens in wheat and wood on the Feast of All Saints."

On St. "Andrewe's Day," in accordance with the will of Andreas Lovelace aforesaid, the clergyman and churchwardens, with the parish

clerk, meet in the vestry, and count the loaves provided by this small charity, and the number of applicants who, old and young, are gathered around the door waiting the gift.

"Now, then," says the churchwarden, "who is the worst off among ye?"

"We's all pretty bad for the matter of that, sir," is the general response from the company, all smiling, however, as if it were, rather than otherwise, a blessed privilege to be distressed for the nonce. However, a little orphan girl receives one, and the oldest woman not in the almshouses gets the other. In this way one of the most cheerful but least in value of the Grumbleton charities is annually dispensed.

But Mr. Thomas's benefaction of wheat and wood was a sore place in Grumbleton, which became angry and as bad as ever when All Saints' day came. It is the first of November, 1862, and a fine cold morning, at nine o'clock. The trustees, who have long deviated from the donor's intention of bestowing wheat and wood, and who give all in flour, are met together in the old manorial mill, where all resident poor parishioners receive a quantity of flour, depending on the number in each family. Thus, adults receive a gallon and a half, children under fourteen half a gallon, but the young unmarried people receive nothing. The trustees have their list, and each family obtains its supply as name and quantity are called. But, first of all, three or four people whose names are not in the list come with sacks, looking wistfully at the trustees. They are parishioners, just over the parish boundary, and no more. They plead hard; it is a pity to refuse them; yet there is no help for it.

"Please, sir," says one, "how much for mother? Mother's sick, and can't come."

"Can't come!" says an indignant matron. "What was she a doing last night? Ain't she shamed of herself?"

"Sending *her*, too," chimes in another dame, in mighty scorn. "Git along with ye, hussy, ye're over the border."

So the poor girl retreats, with her empty bag and downcast countenance.

Meanwhile the weighing out continues, and few thanks are heard, though Grumbleton, like other places, has its cheerful folks, who can live and be thankful.

"Now, Mrs. Catkin," says the churchwarden, and young Mrs. C. steps forward to receive as much as she can carry.

"Please, sir," says Mrs. Catkin, "let me take my brother's."

"Your brother! What does he want with it? He's a gentleman."

"My brother," retorts Mrs. Catkin, in rising wrath, "has been married these three or four months, and his wife's confined this morning. I should think he has as good a right to it as anybody in the parish."

However, she is sent about her business somewhat curtly, and told that she ought to be thankful for what she has. The indignant hus-

band and father, nevertheless, quickly appears on the scene. He is a young man of thirty, well-dressed for his class, and in the receipt of some twenty-four shillings a week.

"So. I's a gentleman, is I?" he demands indignantly of the trustees. "You calls me a gentleman—that's the way you treats poor folk as wants to be respectable."

"Content yourself, my man," says the churchwarden, quietly; "nobody will call you a gentleman again. It was a mistake."

"And what for arn't I to have the same as the rest?"

Hereupon down comes the clergyman, and gives him a good (moral) thrashing on the spot, from which Catkin at length retires, the most injured and angry of men.

After the dole is over, the trustees balance accounts, and depart each his several way, the clergyman down-hearted.

From my experience of parish charities, I question much whether the results anticipated by the founders often are obtained. But it does not unfrequently happen that results never dreamt of by them have been realised. Our almshouses were founded for poor women, who, by the original intention of the foundress, were to receive two shillings a week, and be provided with comfortable furnished rooms, rent free. It was thought that such provision, together with parish relief, would secure a sufficient maintenance for the almswomen. But long before the death of the foundress a parochial difficulty occurred, and it was foreseen that the parish could not pay, or rather would not (for we did much as we liked in those times), the weekly allowance to old women, which was three shillings. Under this state of things, Elizabeth Brown munificently increased the charity to such an amount as to relieve the parish for ever of the cost of maintaining half a dozen of its matrons. When the plan for union rating shall have come in and put such matters on a broader basis than at present, this advantage will not be of the same value to us that it now is, and, doubtless, before that time comes, we shall have hatched a fresh charity grievance.

There have been cases in which overseers and churchwardens have stopped relief to the poor during the week that the small charities were dispensed, and thus meanly achieved a small reduction of outgoings.

Of all the commissions which affect our parish none are so beneficial as the Charity Commission. In some way or other the commissioners have secured many benefactions which were ready to perish under abuses, or in the grasp of unscrupulous purchasers of land made chargeable with them. It is certain that had the commission been earlier in the field, we Grumbletonians should have been wonderfully better off than we are now, as we have lost charities which would have almost kept our whole poor off the rate.

But is it not worth while to consider whether means could not be devised by which, in future, benefactions to a parish might be made more

serviceable than they are? Why, for example, might they not serve as encouragements and aids to provident exertion? It is worth remembering that the most squalid and wretched persons and homes do not represent necessarily the cases most suitable for special means of relief. Where the house and people are clean, the clothes well patched, and all things are kept as tidy as half a dozen young ones in a small room will allow—where the father is reputed sober and industrious, and clear of debt, the mother a keeper at home—the pinch of honest poverty is often sharper than the sufferer will tell, and neither alms nor pauper's allowance will be taken willingly. But in aid of all brave struggles something might be done. Where coal and clothing clubs are under the management of the body corporate of clergyman, churchwardens, and overseers, many benefactions might, and ought for their better administration, to be applied by way of aid to their bonus fund. A safe test is afforded by these clubs for ascertaining who are really the industrious and striving poor of the parish, and what hardships lie upon them. And aid thus afforded stimulates the custom of self-help.

It is still to be lamented that efficient legislation is yet to come to the rescue of provident societies, and that the subject is so little understood by those who wish to benefit the poor. There are safe societies in existence, which are certified to be solvent by the actuary, and these, though ousted as much as possible by the less trustworthy beer-house clubs, are, it is believed, gaining ground steadily. They secure to the bread winner support during illness, an annuity in old age, and a sufficient sum for a respectable funeral, with something to spare, without the humiliation of one farthing from the poor-rate. Such provision can be made for a sum little if at all exceeding the annual cost of the Brummagem club.

Parish benefactions, which would assist deserving men to pay their annual premiums in safe societies, would aid in a most important social work. And that they do this is more than can with truth be said on behalf of the bulk of parish charities as they are now administered.

SMALL-BEER CHRONICLES.

It was my duty as a chronicler of Small-Beer to record, some little time since, the death of the Legitimate Drama; I have now in like manner to announce the demise of the LEGITIMATE NOVEL.

The Legitimate Novel! Ah, volumes of the grease-stained covers—one, two, three, with marble sides and leather backs, with yellow leaves covered with marginal notes written in pencil, by such idiots as surely in these terribly wise times exist no longer—volumes of trash, volumes of rot, volumes now of impossible nonsense, now of inflated twaddle, now of inimitable merit, what delight have ye afforded to me, and to many another consumer of Small-Beer in this Vale of Tears. The Legitimate Novel, in three fat octavos, with three hun-

dred and twenty pages in each of the two first volumes, and three hundred and fifty at least in the last, and not many lines in any of the pages, and not many pages in any of the chapters!

For the matter contained in those volumes, it was generally adventurous, romantic, and full of love and persecution. There were prolonged and glowing descriptions of scenery, in which the words "towering" and "nestling" occurred very frequently. There were pages of reflection interspersed among other matters, the author pulling himself up when he had nothing more to add, stopping quite abruptly, and saying, as if it had just occurred to him, "But I am digressing." On the margin of the page which surrounded one of these splendid bits of description, would be written in pencil, "glowing," "life-like," "most graphic;" while by the side of the reflective page would be inscribed in the same hand—perhaps the author's—"great knowledge of life shown here;" or, "these are the words of one who has lived and suffered;" or, "how delightful to find one's own sentiments, as it were, reproduced." These descriptions and reflections were integral and indispensable parts of the legitimate book, and there were inevitable places where they were certain to come in. The ignoble race of skippers—by which I do not mean merchant captains, but persons who shrink from their duties, and pass over, perhaps, this very sentence which I am in the act of writing—the members of that dastard race knew at a single glance when a descriptive or reflective portion of the work under perusal was coming, and jumped off to the account of the duel in the next chapter most unremorsefully. For, there were always some incidents in the book, if you would wait long enough and take the author's way and time of letting you get at them.

Consider from how many things that were once valuable to him the novelist is now shut out. To take an instance or two. What a capital incident for the romance-writer was furnished by that once sufficiently common occurrence, an elopement. What a chance it was to describe all the circumstances connected with a runaway match! When Mr. Calverley discovered the retreat of Miss Beverley, and coming in disguise to the village near which was the residence of the young lady's maiden aunt, managed at last to establish relations with the lady's maid, and to convey a note to his mistress, how exciting the story became. And the preliminaries, the bribing of innkeepers, of post-boys, the meetings between Mr. Calverley's confidential man and Miss Beverley's confidential maid, to make the necessary arrangements; the breathless excitement, too, of the attempt itself, the description of how the evening passed inside the residence of the maternal aunt, how the beautiful heroine was unable to do justice to her meals, how her paleness and agitation were observed and commented on, and accounted for by a fictitious encounter with a mad dog in the course of the previous afternoon, the unusual determination on the part of the old lady to sit up later than usual that evening, telling long

stories of her youthful days, and breaking off from time to time to comment on the inattention of her auditor—was not all this "good business"? And then when the maiden aunt and her suspicious confidential servant were at length disposed of, how harrowing were the misgivings of Miss lest her lover should have abandoned all hope of her coming now that the hour appointed for their meeting was so long passed, how pathetic was her last glance round her innocent bedroom, and how breath-suspending the narrative of her passing along the corridor on tiptoe, of her dropping something outside her aunt's door, of her pausing to listen whether the noise had awakened the old lady, of her hastening on, of her safe passage through the pantry window, of the rain which beat in her face as she emerged into the garden, and of the long low whistle emanating from the windpipe of the confidential valet, announcing that he and his master were still there and on the look-out.

And the flight, all the incidents of that long and hurried post-chaise journey, there was a chance again; the headlong race when another post-chaise was seen in the distance; the having to wait for horses at the next stage, when the fugitives were overtaken by that dreadful post-chaise, which was found to contain—two gentlemen of the press hurrying off to attend a public meeting at Glasgow; the way, too, in which all difficulties were got over and all obstacles overcome by the dexterity and fidelity of that confidential valet, who was of course attached on his own account to the confidential maid, and by her egged on to all sorts of prodigious deeds of valour and cunning—is it not a terrible loss to have such resources as these withdrawn?

For who ever hears of elopements now?

Or, suppose the novelist to have mounted on a stronger pinion yet, and to have favoured us with an abduction instead of an elopement, what a pull *he* had over the modern author of romances. Suppose that the flight was compulsory instead of voluntary; suppose that the devoted damsel was walking with her maid with constitutional views, and that both were suddenly seized by men with black vizards over their faces and carried to a post-chaise—that vehicle being for ever in waiting in the legitimate time—to be joined at the first stage by the wicked gentleman who had planned the attack. Suppose the added excitement and compound interest—so to speak—of the maiden's misery, her indignant interviews with her captor, her cries of "unhand me," and her demands to be restored to her friends. Think, again, of all the secret plottings between mistress and maid in their determination to effect an escape or die, of the good-naured postboy who assists them, of the failing of the enterprise, of the discovery of the abduction by the maiden's real lover, of his pursuit with all its thrilling incidents, and of his final triumph over the abducting villain, whom he slays in fair combat outside his own castle gate.

Who ever hears of abductions now?

What a delightful thing a journey used to be in works of fiction. But even the journey by stage or

diligence is no longer left to the novelist, while, as to the old post-chaise of which he used to be so fond, he is turned clean out of it, and left sitting on his portmanteau at the door of a railway station, with a porter only waiting till he gets up, to stick a label on his luggage.

And then the Duello—there is a loss! What a means of getting rid of the bad character, and bringing the hero out in his true colours, was that hostile meeting at Wormwood Scrubs. "After what has occurred," says Calverley, in his calm clear voice, "but one course is left to persons calling themselves gentlemen." Then was the meeting between the seconds, themselves intimate friends but suspending their intimacy during the progress of this "unhappy affair," the arrangement of the place where the duel should be fought, and the hour when it could come off with the least chance of discovery. Then, came the scene in the apartments of the courageous Calverley, at two in the morning sealing a letter to his beloved, and enclosing a miniature—the miniature is obsolete too, now, mercy befriend us!—and a lock of his richly curling hair. He is perfectly calm, and, having finished his preparations, lies down to take a few hours' sleep, before his friend the colonel arrives at 5.30 (I mean half-past five, 5.30 was unknown in those glorious days), and carries him off to the field. The cloak too! He was shrouded in a cloak to escape observation. That garment—dark blue, with a cape, with velvet collar, and with cords and tassels like a curtain—has gone the way of the miniature, and of the case of duelling-pistols which used to be concealed under its ample folds. When in the early morning the party assembles on the Scrubs, the different members of it are all covered up in cloaks, except the surgeon, who wears a great-coat with the pockets full of surgical instruments, and lint. On the removal of his mantle the bad character is found to be still habited in the evening costume which he had worn the night before. The hero is dressed in a plain black surtout, buttoned closely up to the throat, and wears an appearance of entire calmness, while the looks of his opponent are ghastly and haggard in the last degree.

Who ever hears of duels in these days?

We were talking but now of the miniature. What an important part the miniature has played in its time. How it has been gazed at through tears, addressed in long speeches, sighed over. How it has been transmitted by faithful hands, and has administered comfort, and how it has been delivered into unfaithful hands and has led to the most disastrous discoveries conceivable—which was the more extraordinary, because I don't believe it was at all a good likeness, or likely to be recognised by any human creature. What a small head the subject of that miniature always had, what long and sloping shoulders. How his hair was piled up—and so was hers, if it was a lady's miniature—on the top of the head, and gracefully arranged to conceal the forehead and the corners of the eyes. And what a complexion the miniature

had, what lilies and roses for the ladies' cheeks, and what blue veins about their temples and their soda-water-bottle necks!

No more miniatures now, and the modern fictionist must pile up his effects as best he can, with the aid of cartes de visite and pistol-grams.

I cannot enumerate all our losses; but what a fearful thing it is to be no longer able to fall back upon the gaming-table as a last resource. We have lost the gambler, the man with pale set features, with dishevelled hair, and disordered dress. His trembling wife no longer sits up for him all through the long hours of the night and early morning. Nay, the occasional gambler, even, is gone from our grasp; the man who, having lost his patrimony, rushes out to the hell in St. James's-street and stakes his all upon one last chance. What a gallant rattle that was of the dice-box as it swept round our desperado's head. "It fell, and Delisle was a beggar!"

Where is the gaming now? I don't know where to ruin myself. Crookford's has ceased to exist, or is turned into an honourable eating-house. The rattle of the dice is heard there no longer. It is succeeded by the rattle of the knives and forks. If one of the desperate characters of the "good old times," awakening from a trance, were to rush off to that once terrible abode of excitement and crime, he would now be encountered by a harmless necessary waiter, who would inquire whether he "would please to take soup or fish," or whether he would content himself with "a cut off the joint."

The Legitimate Novel had its standard forms of expression. Here is a very favourite phrase: "Poor, but scrupulously clean." Who was it that first put this hideously absurd combination of incongruous words together? You might as well describe some piece of drapery as red, but inconceivably green, or speak of a house as small, but immeasurably large, or of a friend's character as deceitful, but scrupulously sincere. Had the inventor of the phrase ever paid a washing-bill? Had he ever had a shirt "got up?" Surely the phrase must have come originally, either from a millionaire who never inspected a washing-bill, or from a Capuchin Friar who never received one.

When the virtuous family, tyrannised over and deprived of their rights by a wicked relative, got into difficulties and retired to "a small town in the west of England," they always distinguished themselves by being poor "but scrupulously clean." Then it was that you heard of their frugal meal being spread upon a "board"—an inconvenient article of furniture, by-the-by, for the purpose—covered with a cloth of "snowy whiteness." The covering of that same board with a cloth of snowy whiteness, means that this distressed family indulged in seven tablecloths (independent of accidents) per week. Similarly, that inevitable "white dress"—that simple white dress of the heroine. There was a pathetic chapter comparing the past time when she was decked in silks and satins, with the present time, when, in her reduced circumstances, she contents herself with that plain white robe, so pure, so touching in its simplicity. In the name of the united clear-

starchers of Britain, I protest against such madness, and affirm that white is the most "expensive wear" known in the nineteenth century.

Then, there was the Scotch and Irish phraseology with which those legitimists who laid their scenes north of the Tweed, or in the Emerald Isle, indulged. "I dinna ken"—what a favourite expression that always was; we were in for it the moment our narrative skipped over the border. Yet, I have travelled two or three times in Scotland, and, in their own country and elsewhere, have conversed with plenty of Scots, but I never heard the expression. I doubt whether it would be understood in the land of cakes. This dinna ken was fearfully and wonderfully aggravating; but the Legitimate Novel was more to be dreaded when it crossed St. George's Channel. Nothing but "mavournreens," and "macushilas," and "machrees," and "bedads," and "at all at all." One gets at last sceptical about these matters, and I have been so long, and so entirely in vain, looking out for a case of "at all at all" in real life, that I have got at last to infidelity as to that form of words altogether.

The Legitimate work of fiction began in one of two ways: either by stating all the preliminary matter which it was needful for the reader to know—and sometimes a great deal more—in the first few chapters, dedicating them entirely to pedigrees, to biographies of the grandfathers and grandmothers of the characters; or else to pander to the impatience of the student by plunging at once into the middle of an interesting scene or conversation, without any preliminary explanation. At first sight this last mode of operating would seem to be the more delightful; but what was the use of beginning in this gay and sprightly manner in Chapter I., if the wretched reader caught sight of these awful opening words of the second chapter: "It is now needful that we should explain something of the history of the characters whom we have thus *unceremoniously* introduced to the reader?"

And there was another little trial. "We must now return to Lenora." Or, "the exigencies of our story now require that we should return to Lenora." What moments were chosen by the author for that return to Lenora! We were dragged back to that young woman just when we were bent on hearing the termination of that terrific adventure, in which the hero was involved. It was a breathless moment in the youth's fate. The sword was hanging over his head, the poison-cup was at his lips, the challenge was received, the dice were oscillating in the air, when we must now return to Lenora. And we didn't want to return to Lenora. And when we had returned to Lenora, and had got over the disgust of that blessed restoration, and had disciplined our minds to that degree that they were content to follow her fortunes instead of those of our fancy's hero—were we allowed to do so? No. We must then return to Edgar, and we were dragged away from her as we had previously been from him, and were whisked off again to some uncongenial region, where all was ice and desolation.

And the worst of it was that many of these tremendous adventures thus rudely arrested, were never finished; the hero of the situation being taken in hand again long afterwards in some altogether different part of his career, and, perhaps, merely alluding to the termination of that adventure in which you were once so madly interested, in a few cursory remarks addressed to his bosom friend, as the two "lounged together on the shores of Capri." Edgar having no business at Capri, observe, and no business to take you there, and not in the least accounting for himself even as to that inane passage of his existence.

The termination of the Legitimate Book was always expected to be very complete and full: disposing in a satisfactory manner of every one of the characters introduced, one after another, in the last chapter, just as in a Legitimate Play all the persons of the drama are ranged in the last scene before the audience, and each dismissed with some small and appropriate morsel of dialogue. "The old doctor remained to the last the friend and counsellor of all the poor and suffering people in the neighbourhood, he never married, and always retained his caustic humour, and that real spirit of benevolence, which lay concealed beneath it, and which caused him to be beloved by every one who knew him." "Giles the poacher—Giles the vagabond—Giles the convict—became at last a reformed character, and, obtaining the situation of teacher in the village school, inculcated with an earnestness which sprang from the remembrance of his own faults, the precepts of rectitude and morality. He was frequently the humble guest of our young couple, and a favourite always, both in the parlour and the kitchen."—"And Ellen—what of Ellen? Ellen remained single! Her life was devoted to the service of the poor. Often was her slight form to be seen flitting from cottage to cottage, or seated by the side of the aged and afflicted, listening to their complaints and assuaging their sufferings." And then came the lighter vein of wind-up. "The Widow Twostrings looked so well in her neat weeds, and was so frequently visited by her old lover Stephen Hardy, that rumours began soon to circulate that she was about to console herself, and that, nothing daunted by the unsatisfactory nature of her first matrimonial venture, she had it in contemplation to speculate in the marriage market once again. Of course these are only rumours, but rumours are not *always* false, and we can only say that if in this case report should speak correctly, we wish the lively widow a long life and a merry one."

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